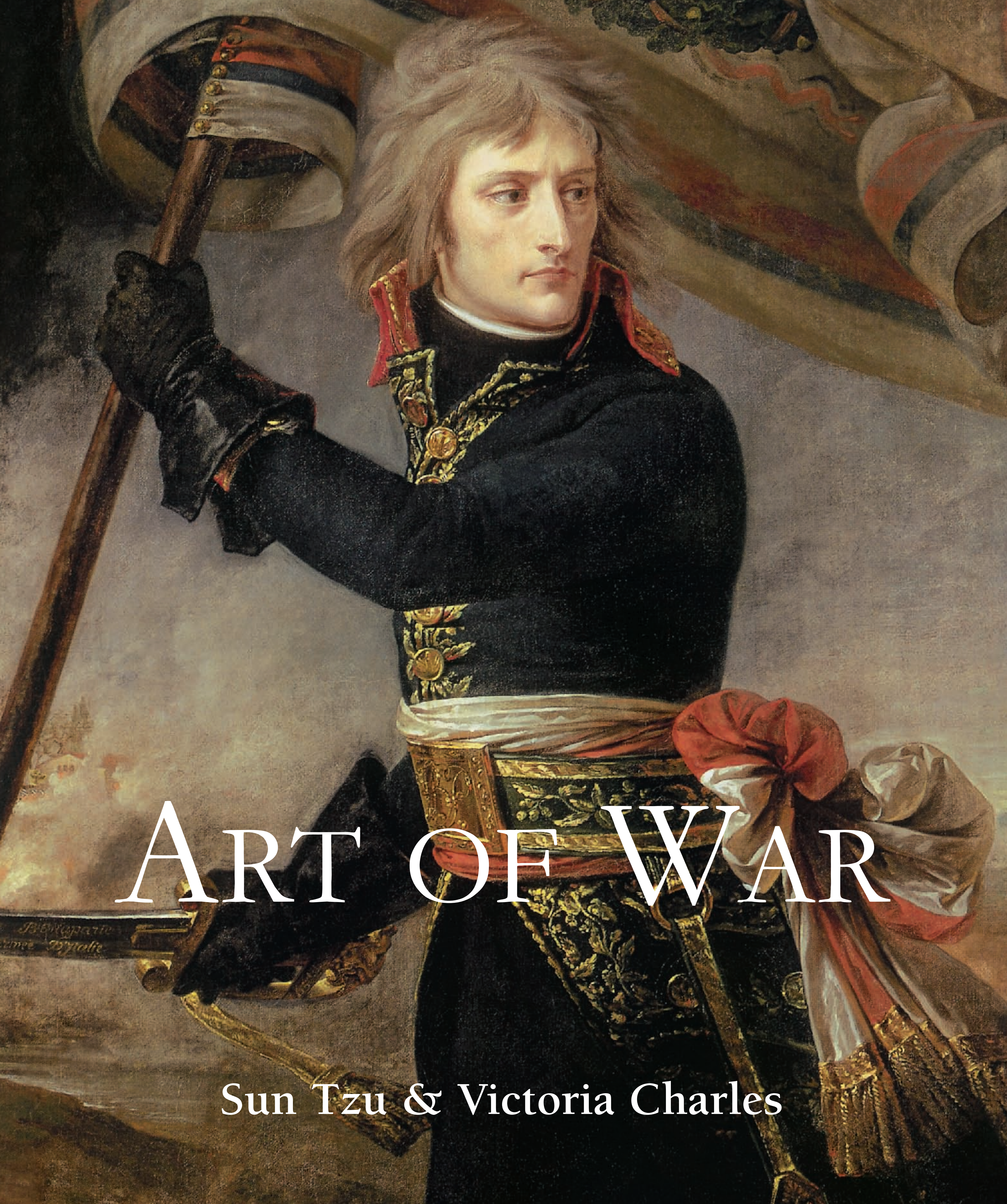

ART OF WAR

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VISIT…

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Victoria Charles and Sun Tzu

ART OF WAR

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Introduction

"The art of war" – the first association people have with this term, has, not surprisingly, nothing to do with art but everything to do with war: the ancient military treatise *The Art of War*. Generally attributed to Chinese general Sun Tzu (depending on transliteration also Sun Wu or Sunzi), the book was written in feudal China, roughly 400 to 200 years before Christ. On a side note, depending on the scholarly point of view, the writings – which already had garnered a certain reputation by the time of the so-called Warring States Period – were either written by Sun Tzu alone, with minor annotations after his death from other military thinkers, or alternatively modified and co-written by other Chinese military strategists as well. Whichever way, they provide a broad collection of proverbs concerning key aspects of warfare. Infused with Taoist philosophy, the treatise does not only provide pragmatic advice on such things as military spending or marching order, but is first and foremost meant as educative literature for the ambitious leader. Interestingly enough it does not cover all aspects of warfare in precise detail, as a first-time reader might expect. Instead, many of these thematically arranged proverbs are primarily meant to teach the ideal military leader how to develop a keen eye for the intricacies of leading men and analysing circumstances. On occasion Sun Tzu and his co-authors do provide very specific advice on how to act in different situations and how to interpret different warning signs, but the overall purpose remains one of facilitating a way of thought. In short, it concerns itself more with overall strategy, to a minor degree with logistics and the least with tactics. These characteristics are what make the ancient writings even today popular among military officers, businessmen, historians and military hobbyists, who revere the book for its timeless wisdom that remains applicable and even transferable to other domains, such as business, in an age that differs so fundamentally to the era in which the original was written.

The title of this art book has, of course, been chosen intentionally to invoke the Chinese general and his writings. While the primary purpose is to showcase art that has been inspired by war, it is also meant to be a chronology of important and decisive battles in the history of the world. In this context, we want to apply the general's wisdom to the wars that have been fought throughout the ages, whether the factions involved have acted according to them or whether they have shown an almost criminal neglect of the most basic principles of warfare. Of course, their application is not based on a deep military or historical analysis, but it is rather meant as an inspiration for the reader to delve into the history and circumstances as well as Sun Tzu's writing him- or herself. Beginning with one of the earliest armed conflicts, the Battle of Kadesh, this book visits battlefields from the ever war-torn landscapes of Europe to the more inconspicuous battlegrounds in the frozen wastes of Finland or the scorching deserts of the Middle East and ends its grand tour with the wars that changed the understanding of war and warfare forever: the World Wars. Every conflict is accompanied by artwork, either contemporary or retrospective, meant to show how the depiction of war changed (or remained the same) throughout the centuries.

Millennia of War

Sun Tzu said: The art of war is of vital importance to the State. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin.

Édouard Detaille, *Attack of French Hussars at Gravelotte, 16 August 1870*, 1890.
Oil on canvas, 480 x 320 cm.
Musée de l'Armée, Paris.

Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.

To make a list of all the wars, battles or minor armed conflicts that humanity has ever fought throughout its history, would be go beyond the scope of the possible. For one, we can say for certain that not all conflicts have been recorded or handed down in history and not all accounts of those battles that have been committed to the collective memory of mankind, are above scrutiny. One of the most famous truisms expresses this by saying that "history is written by the victor", which seems to cast a shadow of doubt over those eras of human history that are less well documented. How many minor conflicts have fallen through the cracks of the stage that is history? How many records have been written by historians who were mired too much in their culture and perspective? For the moment, these questions remain unanswerable. What is left, is to trust sources with a claim to relative objectivity. Thus, no book can ever claim to include a full account of the history of warfare. What can be done, however, is to select among the most incisive conflicts that are known to us. This is exactly what this book is trying to accomplish. To give an overview of the battles which have shaped civilisation in general or, sometimes, specific cultures. In choosing which conflicts to represent, not only the scope of the conflict was a decisive criterion, but also other aspects, such as the application of new technology, cunning tactical manoeuvres, tales of individual bravery or political background. For this purpose, the writings of various scholars and authors have been chosen to create a reading experience that includes both contemporary and classic perspectives on the various conflicts.

The texts are not meant to give a perfectly detailed account of every battle but are rather accompanying pieces to the artwork, giving a glimpse of the events surrounding the battle or the actual fighting itself. Due to their age, some of these descriptions adopt a point of view that is either outdated by scholarly standards or still rooted in the last century, where war was not yet the subject of scrutiny it is today. While it is acknowledged that there is a fundamental problem in relying upon historical accounts or retrospective analyses which exhibit a more or less obvious bias, there is still a benefit to be gleaned from examining those kinds of texts. At the very least they will reveal the perspectives prevalent in the minds of many historiographers or scholars throughout theirs centuries and offer an outlook into an age when war was regarded as either a perfectly valid method of expansion, a battle of wits between cultured men or a tool of natural selection.

Portraying War in Art

While most battles that will be shown in this art book have been chosen for their role in the history of civilisation, the selection is also distinctly governed by the "canvas", meaning that a share of the conflicts, despite lacking the majority of criteria that earned other battles a spot in the book, have been chosen because their artistic representation contributes to the understanding of the purpose of war-inspired art. Assuming that war art is not simply *l'art pour l'art*, it stands to reason that the creation of battle paintings always served a specific purpose. Be it glorification, criticism, documentation or the exercise of artistic self-expression.

Needless to say, the depiction of war has certainly changed over the centuries, not only because the preferred media of display changed, e.g. from wall carvings to wall mosaics to illuminated manuscripts, but also because the understanding of war shifted over the centuries. One of the few constants, however, was and is the "propaganda value" of war depiction. Be it the aforementioned wall paintings, namely the depiction of victorious Ramesses II at the Battle of Kadesh (p. 27), the sculpted battle scenes on Trajan's Column or the oil painting of Napoleon at the Battle of the Pyramids (pp. 176-177), their purpose remains the same: a glorification of a military leader or a celebration of military exploits.

This characteristic naturally also brings with it a certain amount of falsification – to use the conflict at Kadesh as an example again: the only (visual) account of the battle that has survived is Egyptian, which is thus certainly not unbiased. Furthermore, the relief shows Ramesses II as the conqueror of the Hittite people, which is, historically speaking, not quite true. Although the battle was enormous in its proportions, especially considering the epoch, it did not decisively end the conflict between the two peoples. In fact, Ramesses was not the glorious architect of the downfall of the Hittite empire at all. Rather, the constant raids of a yet unidentified seafaring culture weakened the empire to such a degree that they could not maintain power in the region.

In contrast, Napoleon does not need any exaggeration of his deeds. His military genius is indisputable, as his campaigns through Europe prove just too well. Paintings of his exploits, however, show another aspect that pervades centuries of war art. In the majority of paintings detailing the Napoleonic Wars, he occupies the central spot in the composition. The way he is shown is reverent, sometimes almost affectionate. He is always portrayed as being calm and serene – an unshakeable military leader. The figures of enemies in these paintings display the tendency to fall to their knees or on their backs, recoiling in horror and awe from this magnificent, unconquerable foe. In short, he becomes a messianic figure, guiding France towards its destiny.

This raises the question about whether war-inspired art was ever meant to be or ever could be purely documentary. Since most of the contemporary accounts and depictions, were created or commissioned by the victor, it certainly entails a perspective that shows the victorious side of the conflict in a more favourable light.

Then there are those depictions that show events that had happened decades or centuries earlier. Apart from the fact that artists conjuring a scene from a past battle have to rely on older accounts, there is almost always an artistic reason for the re-visitation: Classicism, for example, is famous for idealising the art and history of ancient Greece while the Russian realist painters chose scenes from their country's history to create a patriotic aesthetic that celebrates the spirit and the accomplishments of the Russian people. This leads to a certain "romanticisation" of events that ignores the less sympathetic (or outright horrific) details to focus on what is perceived as the glorious aspect of war. Taking a masterpiece painting from Ilya Repin as an example, that in itself is not a direct battle painting, but shows a well-known war-host of cossacks that enjoyed immense popularity in 18th century Russia: *Reply of the Zaporozhian Cossacks* (1880-1891; State Russian Museum, St Petersburg) shows a merry band of Ukrainian cossacks gathered around a table, writing a humorous and profanity-filled letter in response to a demand note sent to them earlier by Sultan Mehmed IV. The noble warriors are a sympathetic bunch – free, wild and indomitable men. Furthermore they are resisting a ruler who had the clear agenda of conquering the lands they were protecting. This impression, however, is not complete. While the Zaporozhian Cossacks surely were an indomitable bunch, they also had the tendency to engage in raping and pillaging on their raids. While that is not unusual for a raiding army of that age, it does not correspond with the impression that the painting is trying to create. The point here is not to condemn the idealisation or "romanticisation" of war paintings but rather to point out that the artistic reception of war does not necessarily entail the mandate to portray events exactly as they happened or as truthful as possible. Which is true for art in general – just as art is highly individual and subjective in intention, choice of motive and execution, so is art inspired by war, maybe even more so. We can conclude that the documentary aspect of war-art is a recent development. This will be explored in more detail in the section "The Artists of War".

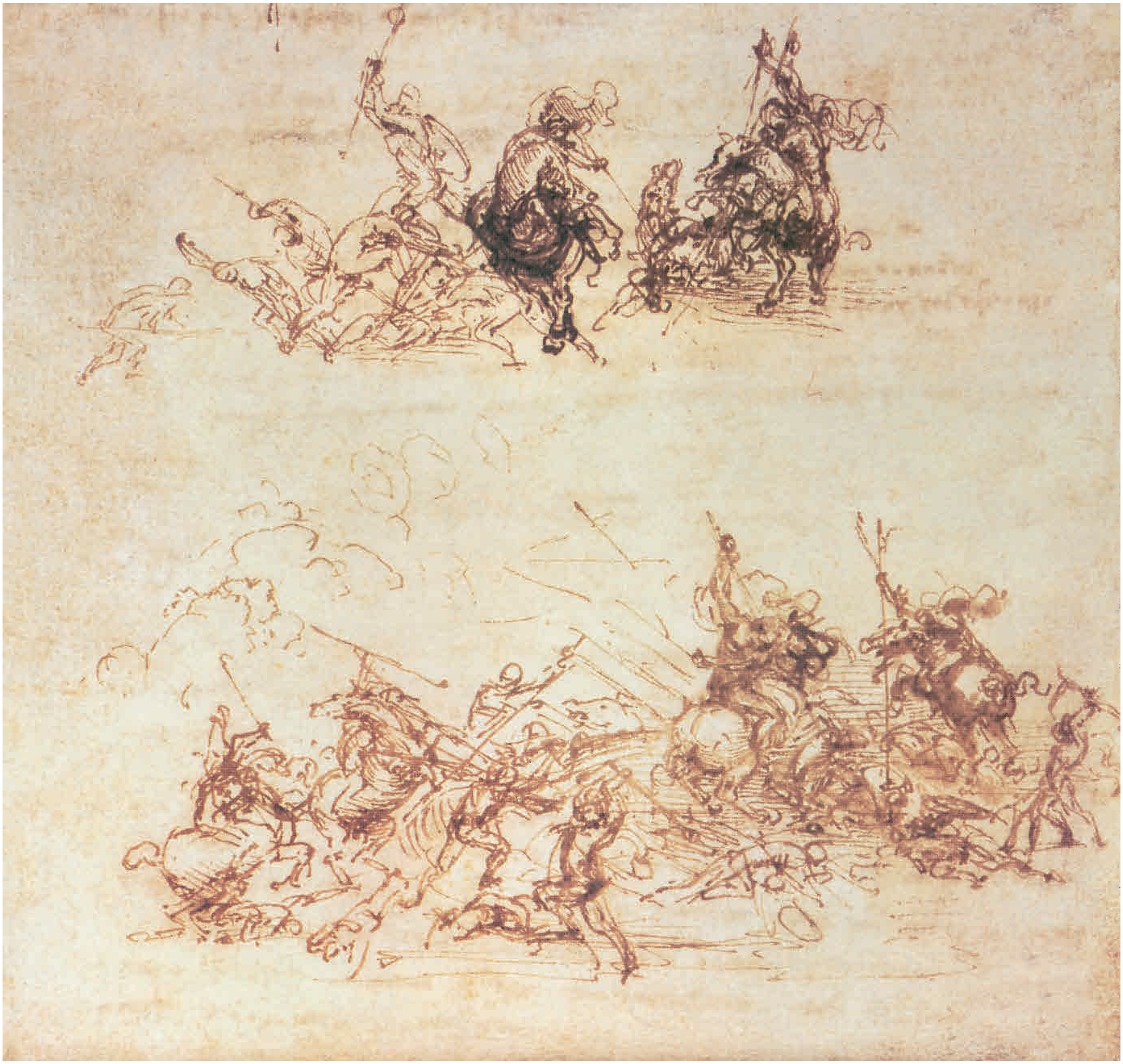
This leaves the last aspect of art and war to be discussed here: criticism. Art that is outright critical of war is hard to find before the 17th century. One of the first examples might be Peter Paul Ruben's *The Horror of War* (after 1638; The National Gallery, London) which is an allegorical depiction that shows Mars, the Roman god of war, marching, hell-bent on living up to his title, out of a temple, while several putti and a (literally) rubenesque woman are trying to dissuade him from his plan of action. They are surrounded by figures that symbolise either various disasters that come in the wake of wars, like famine or plague, or are just human figures that are trying to flee from the approaching Mars. While the painting clearly does not attempt to cast war in a favourable light, its visual style does not correspond to the title and makes it initially hard to identify as a piece of "criticism". One of the first explicit and truly haunting contributions to artistic war criticism comes from Francisco Goya, roughly 150 years later. In his series *The Disasters of War*, a collection of several dozen sketches, he shows a wholly different face of war: the cruelties, the massacres and the bestiality. In this context, war art becomes effectively "documentary" again, as these sketches are based on personal experience. Thus, Goya heralded later artists who would give the depiction of war their very own note: artists like Otto Dix, Salvador Dalí or Pablo Picasso.

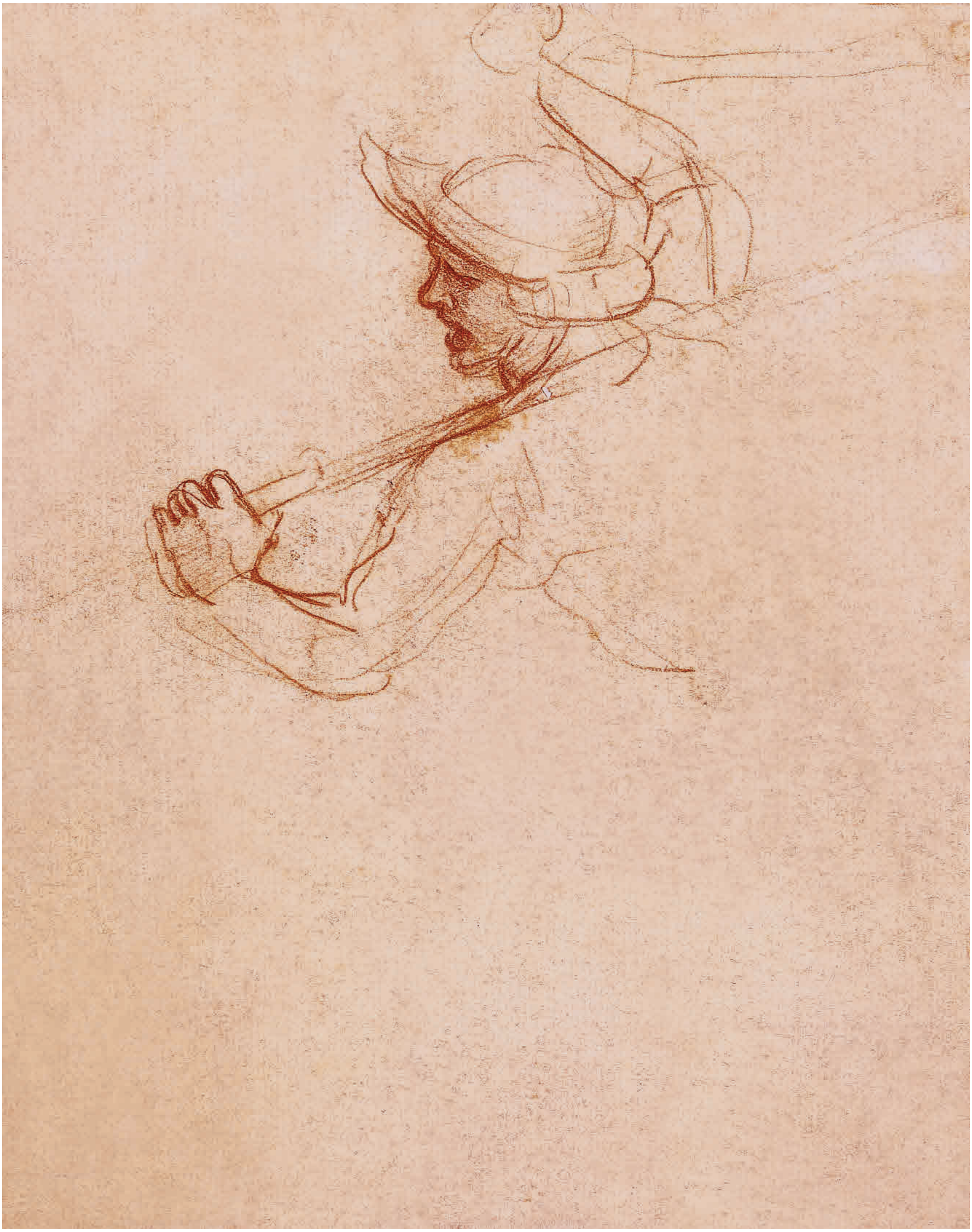
Let us for a moment examine the paintings themselves: what is portrayed and how it is portrayed? One of the most striking aspects of western battle paintings is their "leader-centricity". A substantial number of depictions feature a – usually victorious – leader, general or warlord as their central character; whether he is in the thick of the fighting, calmly watching the events from afar, negotiating the terms of surrender after the battle or – mostly the case in ancient depictions – towering godlike over vanquished foes. This is especially true for the majority of paintings painted in the 19th century that revisited historical battlefields. Understandably so, since a victory in battle is usually attributed to the strategic genius of a leader. Beyond that, the examination of history in general tends to revolve around dominant characters. Another subset of the "leader-centric" painting deals with the death of one such person. Usually meant to commemorate the leader in question, these paintings dramatise the events surrounding the death and set the stage for a heroic death scene. Examples are the death of General Talbot at the Battle of Castillon (p. 109) or *The Death of General Wolfe* (1770; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa) by Benjamin West.

However, there had also always been a strong tendency towards the depiction of individual, representative scenes in the history of war-related art. Beginning with Greek vase-painting, some artists had to make good use of their limited space for depiction and thus chose scenes that would best represent the conflict in question. The same is true for a lot of images from illuminated chronicles, which also exhibit the tendency for small, orderly battle scenes that summarise the events of the battle in a compact way. For that purpose realistic proportions are often sacrificed to create a depiction that captures the whole of the battle in one image. Larger battle scenes can be found in the late Dutch or German Gothic art. A prominent example is Albrecht Altdorfer's *The Battle of Alexander at Issus* (p. 38), which, being part of a larger cycle of historical paintings that were commissioned by William IV, Duke of Bavaria, tries to grasp the full scope of the battle by depicting the two large armies pitted against each other with the two opposing leaders being small figures in the masses of soldiers. Furthermore, the painting exhibits another aspect that prevailed in the arts until the Renaissance: both the Greek and the Persian armies are portrayed as medieval knights; thus subjected to a "transculturation". This peculiar aspect can also be found in many illuminated documents from early medieval times and has its roots in the fact that the artists responsible never had access to any material that might have helped them to develop a realistic depiction. However, that changed with the Renaissance and the rise of cultural exchange, archaeological discoveries and a new interest in painting in a realist manner. Art in general became more precise and differentiated.

The late 19th century saw a rise in paintings about contemporary battles that were less focused on particular leading figures but instead depicted detailed scenes putting equal – if not more –

Leonardo da Vinci, *Cavalry Battle*, Study for the *Battle of Anghiari*, c. 1504.
Ink on paper, 14.7 x 15.5 cm.
Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.





emphasis on the common soldier. This trend continued with advances in photography which suddenly enabled "true realism" – the opportunity to show and document all facets of war and give the interested viewer access to the material in a speed that had been impossible before.

The Artists of War

"We were specialists in camouflage, but at that time were fighting for our lives as ordinary infantry. The unit was composed of artists, since it was the theory of someone in the Army that we would be especially good at camouflage." (Kurt Vonnegut, *Bluebeard*)

For centuries, battles were just one of the many motives the multi-faceted artist chose to depict. His motivation was usually of a purely aesthetic nature or on occasion, financial when he was commissioned to create such a painting. This started to change around the time of the American Revolution, when artists such as John Trumbull or Emanuel Leutze (painter of the famous *Washington Crossing the Delaware;* situated in The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York), started to focus more on or even specialise in war-related art. This is not surprising, since this development can be retraced in the world of art in general. While there have always been outstanding artists that worked in multiple fields and never settled on one subject, a certain trend started to evolve roughly after the Renaissance. Artists chose one thematic field which they adhered to for the majority of their creative life. In war-related art this development continued as such. Apart from the "civilian" artists that chose to make the wars of their country the subject of their art, even governments started to appoint official war artists, who partly served in the army themselves, and commissioned them to document conflicts. From there it was only a short step to armies developing specific art programmes and the "embedded artist" – an artist-soldier, whose impressions of war and conflict were at the same time absolutely subjective but also unadulterated. In the same way, the function of the war photographer rose to prominence. It is in this context that the term "documentary" can truly be applied to war-related art. Not that the impressions captured by war artists and photographers are beyond bias or distortion, but even if they just chronicle one person's subjective war experience, they already transcend centuries of war paintings in terms of realistic, documentary quality. However, this truthfulness heralded at the same time the end of war art in its then current form. Artists who fought in World War I did not come back with impressions of noble warriors assaulting enemy positions, recklessly brave cavalry charges or cunning manoeuvres. Instead they showed the horror of losing friends to gas attacks or being crushed by tanks and the gruelling experience of trench warfare, being under constant artillery fire. In a way, this World War brought about the end of glorification of war in art.

The Art of Modern Warfare

Nevertheless, the war painting has not completely ceased to exist, although today people trust photos for documentation, glorification is neither presentable nor feasible and criticism is the main purpose of war-related art. Embedded artists still exist and continue to share their war experience artistically with those who are willing to view and listen. The "art of war" has changed as well. First the Cold War in the second half of the 20th century and then the asymmetrical War on Terror in the early 21th century have further twisted the face of conflict – although the motives for war have stayed largely the same: ethnic hatred, economic interests, intervention and misguided religious fervour. Technological advances have rendered much of what was previously true in warfare null and void. What then, remains true from the original *Art of War*? This: "[War] is a matter of life and death […]"

Leonardo da Vinci, Study of a soldier holding a lance, 1503-1504.
Red chalk on paper, 22.7 x 18.6 cm. Szépmüvészeti Múzeum, Budapest.

Amazonomachy, fragment of a floor-mosaic in Daphne (a suburb of ancient Antioch), 2nd half of the 4th century BCE.
Marble and limestone, 154 x 384 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
Photographer: Wikimedia Commons user Clio20. (p. 16)

Antiquity

Battle of Kadesh (illustrated: 2134-661 BCE)	1274 BCE
Battle of Marathon	490 BCE
Battle of Thermopylae (illustrated: 1814)	480 BCE
Battle of Mantinea	362 BCE
Battle of the Granicus River (illustrated: 17th century)	334 BCE
Battle of Issus (illustrated: 1529)	333 BCE
Battle of Arbela (illustrated: 17th century)	331 BCE
Battle of Heraclea (illustrated: 17th century)	280 BCE
Battle of Cannae (illustrated: 19th century)	216 BCE
Battle of Zama (illustrated: 1688-1689)	202 BCE
Siege of Carthage	149 BCE
Battle of Alesia (illustrated: 1899)	52 BCE
Battle of Teutoburg Forest (illustrated: 1909)	9 CE
Battle of Milvian Bridge (illustrated: 1520-1524)	312 CE

Dark to Middle Ages

496 CE	**Battle of Tolbiac** (illustrated: 1836)
732 CE	**Battle of Tours** (illustrated: 1834-1837)
778 CE	**Battle of Ronceveaux Pass** (illustrated: 15th century)
886 CE	**Siege of Paris** (illustrated: 1834-1836)
1066	**Battle of Hastings** (illustrated: c. 1082)
1099	**Siege of Jerusalem** (illustrated: 14th century)
1160	**Heiji Rebellion** (illustrated: 13th century)
1184	**Battle of Ichi-no-Tani**
1187	**Battle of Hattin**
1204	**Sieges of Zara and Constantinople** (illustrated: 1584 and 1840)
1214	**Battle of Bouvines** (illustrated: 1827)
1242	**Battle of Taillebourg** (illustrated: 1837)
	Battle of Lake Peipus (illustrated: 16th century)
1260	**Battle of Ain Jalut** (illustrated: late 1480s)
1314	**Battle of Bannockburn**
1328	**Battle of Cassel** (illustrated: 1837)
1346	**Battle of Crécy**
1415	**Battle of Agincourt** (illustrated: 15th century)
1429	**Siege of Orléans** (illustrated: 1907)
1432	**Battle of San Romano** (illustrated: c. 1435-1455)
1440	**Battle of Anghiari** (illustrated: 16th/17th century)
1453	**Siege of Constantinople** (illustrated: 1455)
	Battle of Castillon (illustrated: 1839)

Early Modern Age and Wars for European Dominance

Battle of Nancy (illustrated: 1831)	1477
Battle of Fornovo (illustrated: 1578-1579)	1495
Battle of Garigliano (illustrated: 1836)	1503
Siege of Kufstein (illustrated: 1572)	1504
Battle of Marignano (illustrated: 1836)	1515
Siege of Tenochtitlan (illustrated: late 17th century)	1521
Battle of Pavia (illustrated: 1528-1531)	1525
Battle of Kawanakajima (illustrated: 1844-1848)	1561
Massacre of St Bartholomew (illustrated: 1833)	1572
Battle of Arques (illustrated: 17th century)	1589
Siege of Breda (illustrated: 1635)	1625
Battle of Nördlingen (illustrated: c. 1634, 17th century)	1634
Battle of Lens (illustrated: c. 1835)	1648
Battle of the Dunes (Dunkirk) (illustrated: 1837)	1658
Battle of Tournai (illustrated: 17th century)	1667
Storming of Valenciennes (illustrated: 19th century)	1677
Battle of Vienna (illustrated: early 18th century)	1683
Battle of Leuze (illustrated: late 17th century)	1691
Battle of Poltava (illustrated: 1717)	1709
Battle of Denain (illustrated: 1839)	1712
Battle of Fontenoy (illustrated: 1828)	1745
Battle of Lauffeld (illustrated: 1836)	1747
Battle of Bunker Hill	1775
Battle of Saratoga (illustrated: 1852)	1777
Siege of Yorktown (illustrated: 1836)	1781
Battle of Valmy (illustrated: 1834)	1792
Battle of Fleurus (illustrated: 1837)	1794

The Napoleonic Wars

1796	**Battle of Arcole** (illustrated: 1796)
1797	**Battle of Rivoli** (illustrated: 1844)
1798	**Battle of the Pyramids** (illustrated: early 19th century)
1799	**The Russian Italian/Swiss Campaign** (illustrated: 1899)
	Battle of Aboukir (illustrated: 1807)
1800	**Battle of Hohenlinden** (illustrated: 1836)
1807	**Battle of Friedland** (illustrated: 1807)
1808	**Dos de Mayo-Uprising in Spain** (illustrated: 1814)
1809	**Battle of Wagram** (illustrated: 1912)
1812	**Battle of Borodino** (illustrated: 1900)
1813	**Battle of Leipzig** (illustrated: 19th century)
1815	**Battle of Waterloo** (illustrated: 1818, 1843, 1898)

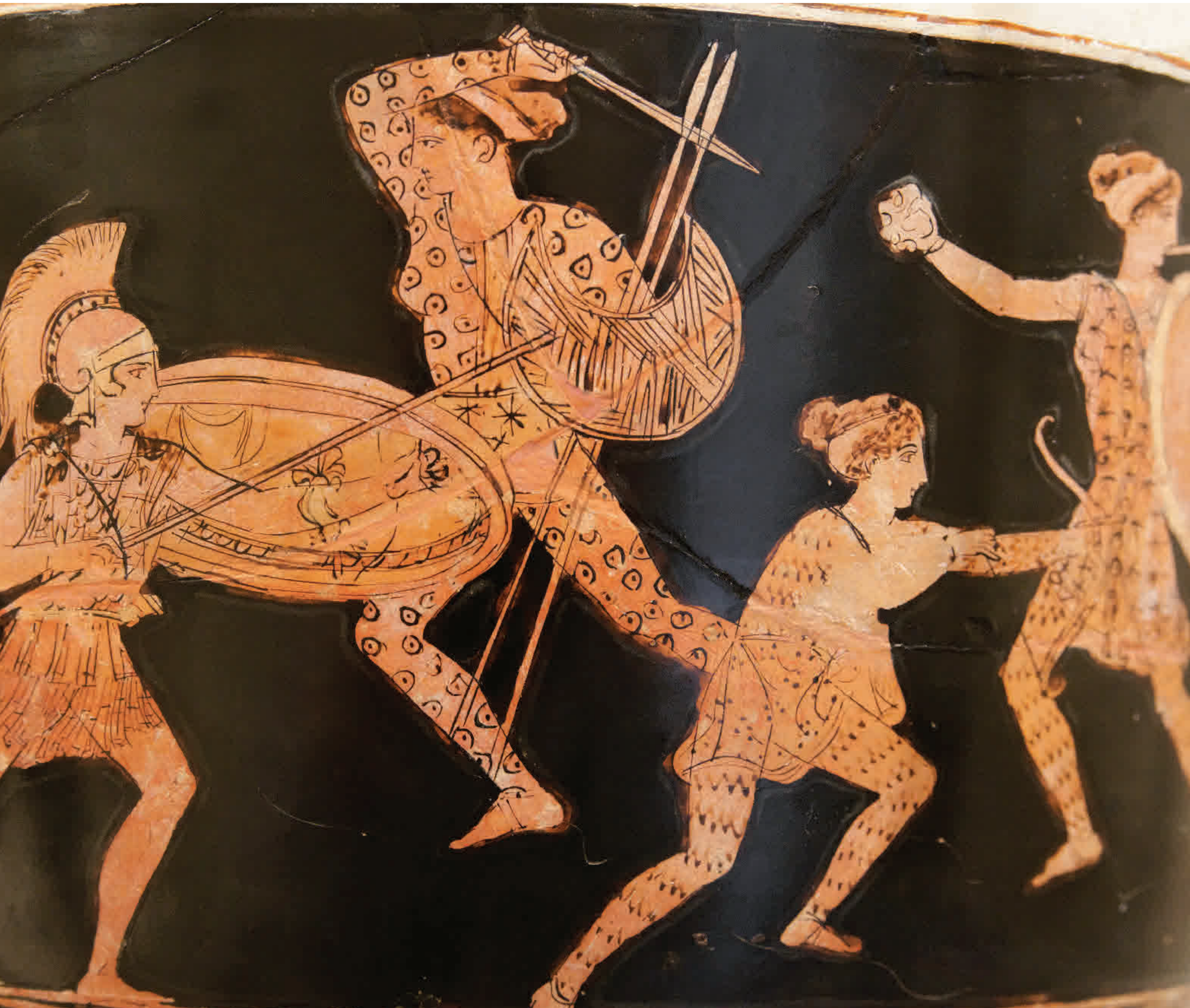
Other Conflicts in the 19th Century

Third Siege of Missolonghi (illustrated: 1826)	1825
Battle of the Alamo (illustrated: 1905)	1836
Battle of the Smala (illustrated: 1843)	1843
Battle of Montebello	1859
Battle of Balaclava (illustrated: 1861, 19th century)	1854
Battle of Solferino (illustrated: 1859)	1859
Battle of Gettysburg (illustrated: 1870)	1863
Siege of Vicksburg (illustrated: 1863)	
Siege of Atlanta (illustrated: 1864)	1864
Battle of Sadowa (illustrated: 1894)	1866
Battle of Gravelotte (illustrated: 1873, 1886)	1870
Battle of Little Big Horn (illustrated: c. 1878)	1876
Battle of Omdurman (illustrated: 1899)	1898
Boxer Rebellion (illustrated: 1900)	1899
Russo-Japanese War (illustrated: 1904)	1904

The World Wars

1914	**Battle of the Ardennes**
	Battle of TannenbergFirst
	Battle of the MarneFirst
	Battle of Ypres
1915	**Second Battle of Ypres**
	Gallipolli Campaign
1916	**Battle of Verdun** (illustrated: 1916)
	Battle of Jutland
	Battle of the Somme
1917	**Third Battle of Ypres**
	Battle of Passchendaele (illustrated: 1917)
	Battle of Arras
	Battle of Cambrai
1918	**Second Battle of the Marne**
	Battle of Amiens
1837	**Bombing of Guernica** (illustrated: 1940-1941)
1939	**German Invasion of Poland**
1940	**German Invasion of Denmark and Norway**
	Western Offensive
	Battle of Dunkirk
	Battle of Britain
1941	**Battle of Tobruk**
	Japanese Invasion of Burma
	Operation Barbarossa
	Attack on Pearl Harbor
1942	**Battle of Midway**
	Second Battle of Tobruk
	Allied Landing at Guadalcanal
	Siege of Stalingrad
	Battle of El Alamein
1943	**Battle of Tripoli**
	Battle of Kharkov
1944	**Operation Overlord (Battle of Normandy)** (illustrated: 1944-1945)
	Operation Market Garden
	Battle of the Bulge
1945	**Allied Invasion of Germany**
	Battle of Berlin
	Battle of Iwo Jima
	Battle of Okinawa
	Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Mythological Battles



The Trojan War
(c. 1194-1184 BCE)

Sing, O goddess, the anger of Achilles son of Peleus, that brought countless ills upon the Achaeans […] (Iliad, Book I)

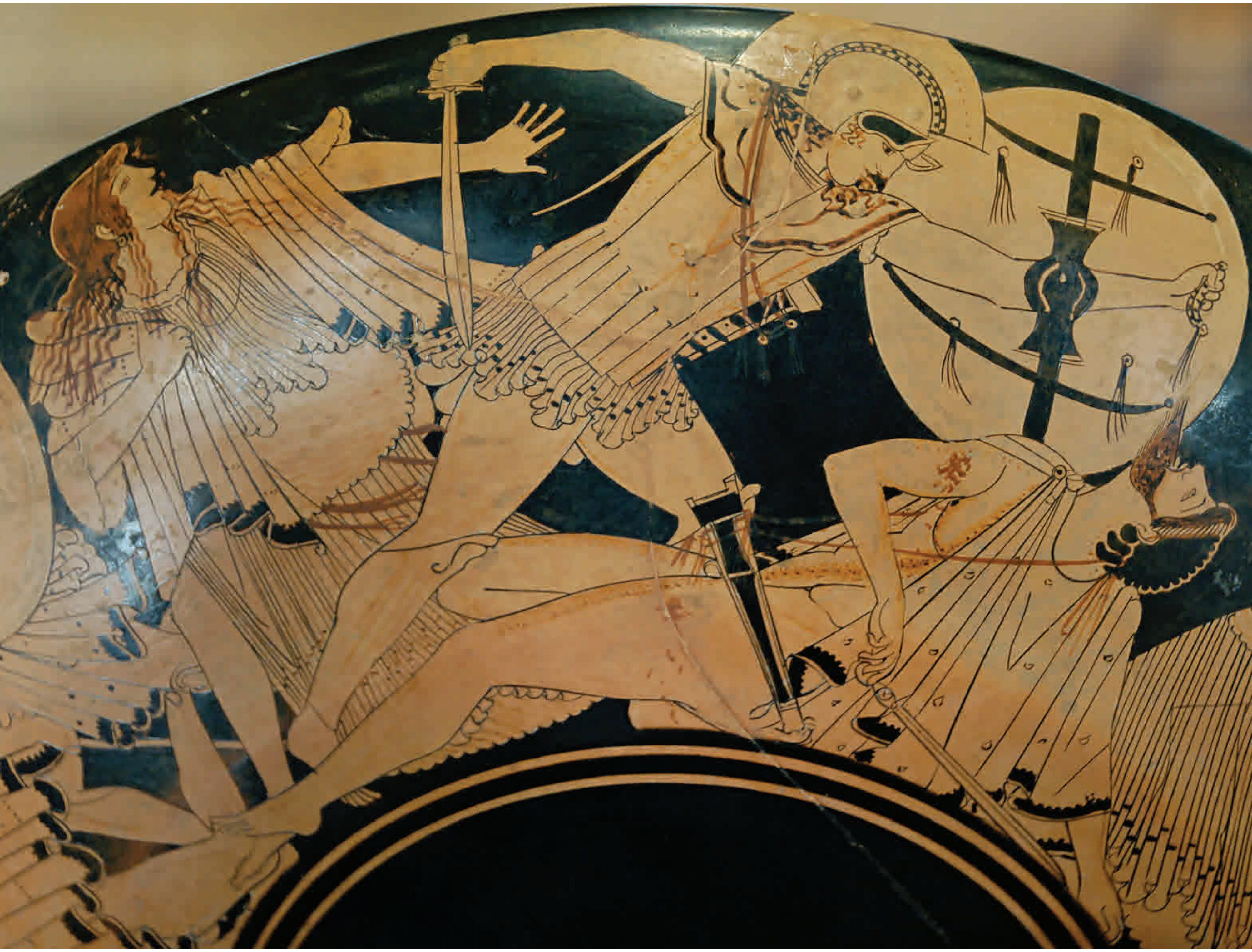
Thus endeth the Trojan War; together with its sequel, the dispersion of the heroes, victors as well as vanquished. The account here given of it has been unavoidably brief and imperfect; for in a work intended to follow consecutively the real history of the Greeks. No greater space can be allotted even to the most splendid gem of their legendary period. Indeed, although it would be easy to fill a large volume with the separate incidents which have been introduced into the "Trojan cycle," the misfortune is that they are for the most part so contradictory as to exclude all possibility of weaving them into one connected narrative. No one who has not studied the original documents can imagine the extent to which this discrepancy proceeds; it covers almost every portion and fragment of the tale. But though much may have been thus omitted of what the reader might expect to find in an account of the Trojan war, its genuine character has been studiously preserved, without either exaggeration or abatement. The real Trojan war is that which was recounted by Homer and the old epic poets, and continued by all the lyric and tragic composers. They preserved its well-defined object, at once righteous and romantic, the recovery of the daughter of Zeus and sister of the Dioskuri – its mixed agencies, divine, heroic and human. The enterprise was one comprehending all the members of the Hellenic body, of which each individually might be proud, and in which, nevertheless, those feelings of jealous and narrow patriotism, so lamentably prevalent in many of the towns, were as much as possible excluded. It supplied them with a grand and inexhaustible object of common sympathy, common faith, and common admiration; and when occasions arose for bringing together a Pan-Hellenic force against the barbarians, the precedent of the Homeric expedition was one upon which the elevated minds of Greece could dwell with the certainty of rousing an unanimous impulse.

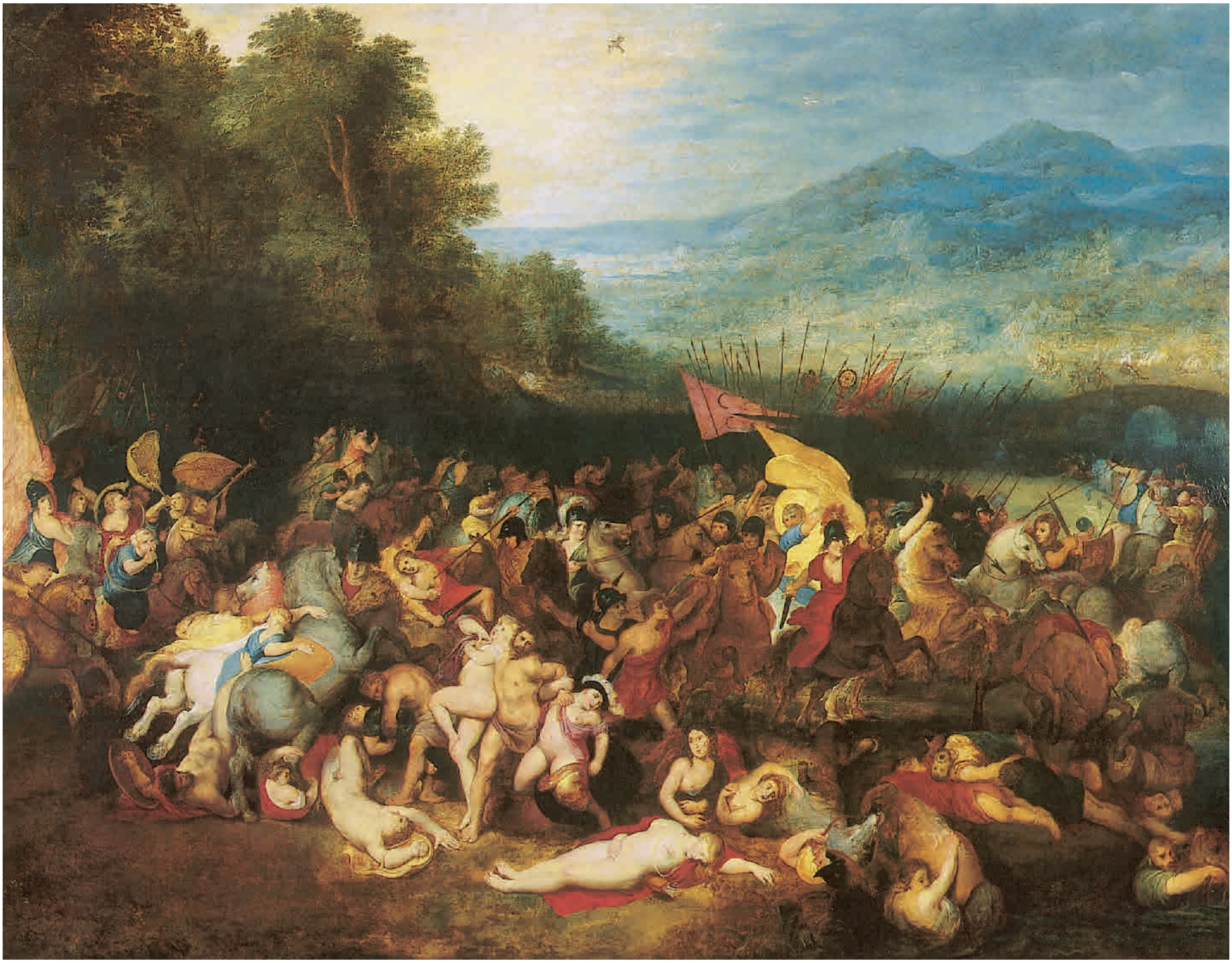
Of such events the genuine Trojan war of the old epic was for the most part composed. Though literally believed, reverentially cherished, and numbered among the gigantic phenomena of the past, by the Grecian public, it is in the eyes of modern inquiry essentially a legend and nothing more. If we are asked whether it be not a legend embodying portions of historical matter, and raised upon a basis of truth, whether there may not really have occurred at the foot of the hill of Ilium a war purely human and political, without gods, without heroes, without Helen, without Amazons, without Ethiopians under the beautiful son of Eos, without the wooden horse, without the characteristic and expressive features of the old epical war; if we are asked whether there was not really some such historical Trojan war as this, our answer must be, that as the possibility of it cannot be denied, so neither can the reality of it be affirmed. We possess nothing but the ancient epic itself without any independent evidence: had it been an age of records indeed, the Homeric epic in its exquisite and unsuspecting simplicity would probably never have come into existence. Whoever therefore ventures to dissect Homer, Arktinus and Lesches, and to pick out certain portions as matters of fact, while he sets aside the rest as fiction, must do so in full reliance on his own powers of historical divination, without any means either of proving or verifying his conclusions.

(adapted from: *History of Greece* by G. Grote)

Amazonomachy, detail of a red-figure vase that is attributed to the **Eritrea Painter**, c. 420 BCE.
Terracotta, 20.5 x 49.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photographer: Marie-Lan Nguyen. (p. 17)

The Fall of Troy, detail of an Attic red-figure vase from the **Brygos Painter**, c. 420 BCE.
Terracotta, 13.5 x 42 x 33.2 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photographer: Marie-Lan Nguyen.





Battle of the Amazons

The Amazons are particularly mentioned by Herodotus, who informs us that the Grecians fought a battle with the Amazons on the river Thermodoon, and defeated them. After their victory, they carried off all the Amazons they could take alive, in three ships. But whilst they were out at sea, these Amazons conspired against the men, and killed them all. Having, however, no knowledge of navigation, nor any skill in the use of the rudder, sails, or oars, they were driven by the wind and tide till they arrived at the precipices of the lake Maeotis, in the territories of the Scythians. Here they went ashore, and seized the first horses they met with, and began to plunder the inhabitants. The Scythians at first took them to be men; but after they had taken some prisoners, they discovered them to be women. They were then unwilling to carry on hostilities against them; and by degrees a number of the young Scythians formed connections with them, and were desirous that these *gentle* dames should live with them as wives, and be incorporated with the rest of the Scythians. The Amazons agreed to continue their connection with their Scythian husbands, but refused to associate with the rest of the inhabitants of the country, and especially with the women of it. Their marriages are attended with the circumstance: no virgin is permitted to marry till she has killed an enemy in the field.

Diodorus Siculus says "There was formerly a nation, who dwelt near the Thermodoon, which was subjected to the government of women, and in which the women managed all the military affairs, like men. Among these female warriors was one who excelled the rest in strength and valour. She assembled an army of women, whom she trained in military discipline, and subdued some of the neighbouring nations. Afterwards, having by her valour increased her fame, she led her army against the rest; and being successful, she was so puffed up, that she styled herself the daughter of Mars, and ordered the men to spin wool, and do the work of the women within doors. She also made laws, by which the women were enjoined to go to the wars, and the men to be kept at home in a servile state, and employed in the meanest offices. Having become eminent for skill in military affairs, she at length built a large city at the mouth of the Thermodoon, and adorned it with a magnificent palace. In her enterprises she enforced military discipline and good order; and she added to her empire all the adjoining nations, even to the river Tanais. She at last ended her days like a heroine, falling in a battle, in which she fought courageously. She was succeeded in the kingdom by her daughter, who imitated the valour of her mother, and in some exploits excelled her. She caused the girls from their infancy exercised in hunting, and trained up military exercises. She instituted solemn festivals and sacrifices to Mars and Diana, which were named Tauropoli. She afterwards carried her arms beyond the Tanais and subdued all the people of those regions, even unto Thrace. Returning with a great quantity of spoils into her own kingdom, she caused magnificent temples to be erected to the deities before mentioned; and she gained the love of her subjects, by her mild and gentle government. She afterwards undertook an expedition against those who were on the other side of the river, and subjected to her dominion a great part of Asia, extending her arms as far as Syria."

(adapted from: *Encyclopædia Perthensis;*
or Universal Dictionary of the Arts, Sciences, Literature, etc.)

Peter Paul Rubens and **Jan Brueghel the Elder**, *The Battle of the Amazons*, c. 1598-1600.
Oil on panel, 37 x 48 cm. Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten, Schloss Sanssouci Bildergalerie, Potsdam.

The Rape of the Sabine Women

[The word "rape" in this context refers to an older usage, meaning "abduction"; from lat. *raptio*]

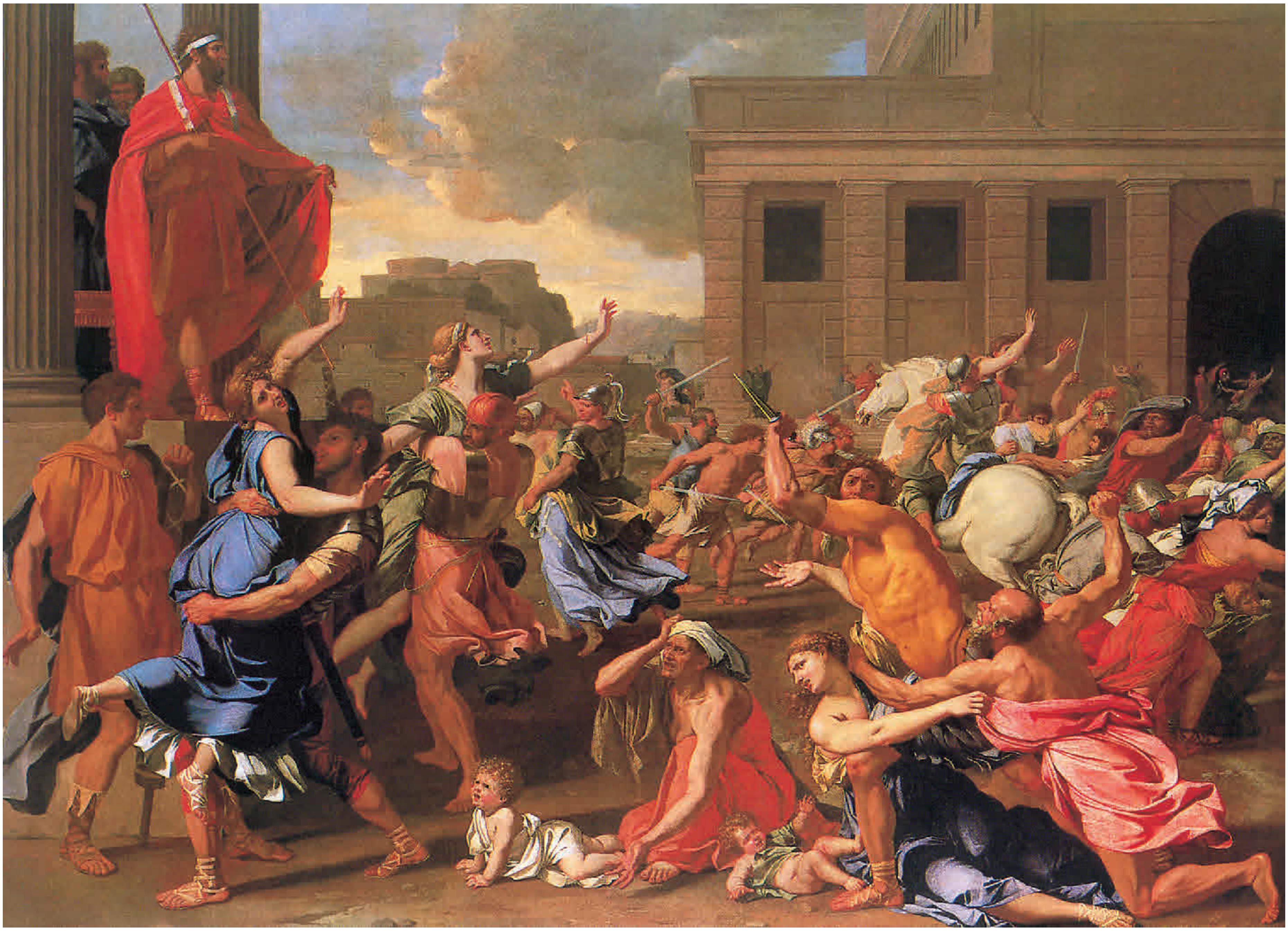
This episode in Roman mythology relates the collective abduction of the Sabine women during the founding of Rome by Romulus. A shortage of women led the Romans to seize those from their neighbours. Romulus also took other steps to increase the numbers of his new settlement. He made an ordinance compelling every man to rear all the male children, and the first-born of the female; and he prohibited the killing of infants, unless they were imperfectly formed. He likewise opened an asylum for refugees from foreign states on the Capitoline hill; the traces of which revealed themselves in later times.

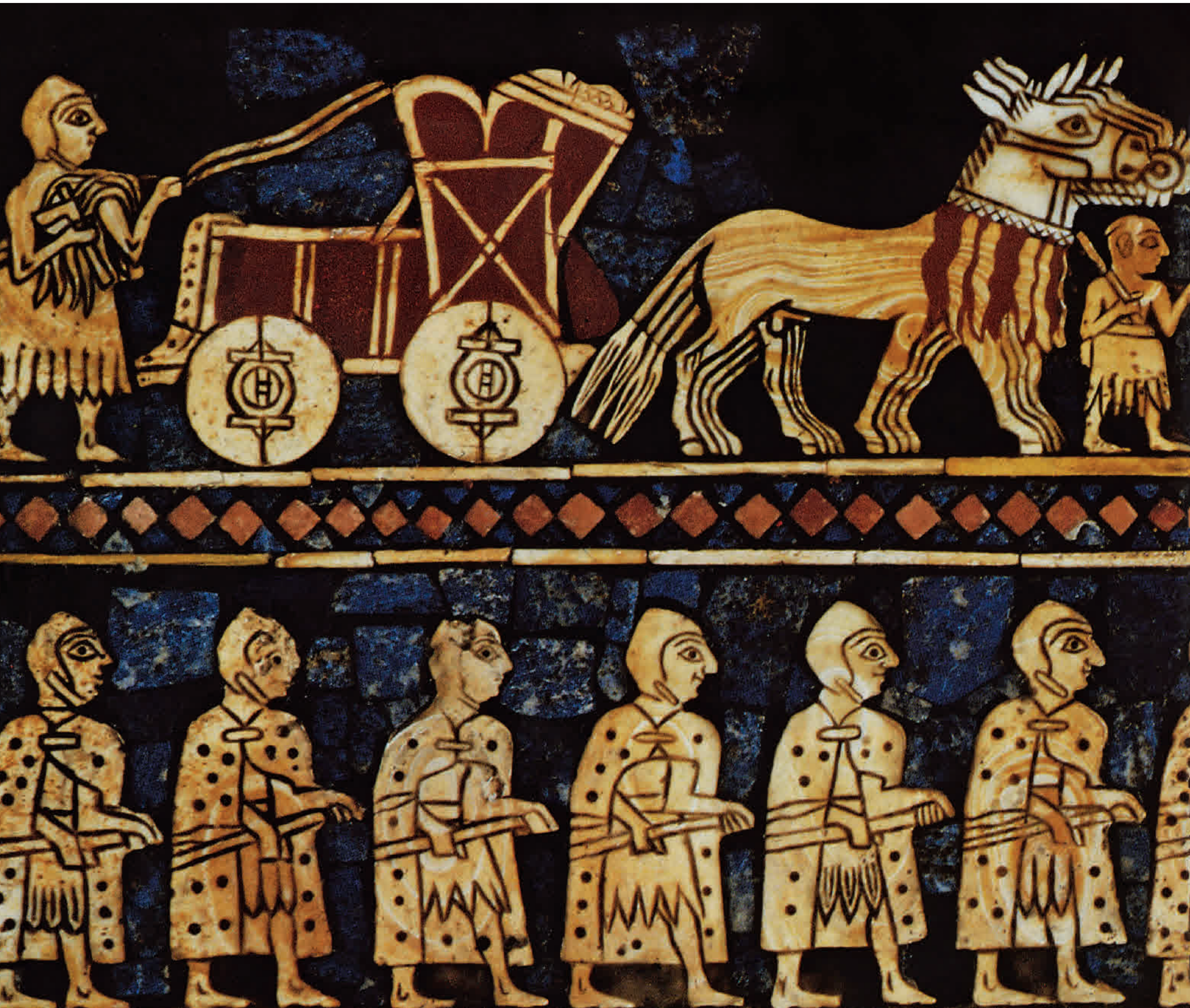
The reception of refugees in the asylum disturbs the natural proportion of the two sexes, and produces a community in which the men preponderate. Hence Romulus sends the neighbouring cities, inviting them to give their daughters in marriage to the Romans. His proposals are rejected, and he accordingly resorts to stratagem for effecting his purpose. He institutes a festival called Consualia (which continued to be celebrated in later times), and invites the neighbouring people to the amusement. On a signal given by himself, the unmarried women are seized, and detained as wives for the Romans. Other causes were found for the rape of the Sabine women; some considered it as an intentional provocative to war, and some thought that it was intended to bring about a reciprocity of marriages with the neighbouring states. Hersilia – who, according to some accounts, was the wife of Romulus, and, according to others, of Hostilius, the grandfather of King Tullus Hostilius – is reported to have been among these Sabine women. Certain ceremonies of the Roman marriage – which supposed the bride to be taken against her will to her husband's house – and particularly the cry of Talassio, which was customary on that occasion – were derived from the Rape of the Sabines.

The outrage thus committed by the Romans roused the anger of the neighbouring cities, and particularly of Cænina, Antemnæ, and Crustumerium, which prepared to attack Rome, and attempted to induce the more powerful Sabine nation to join in the war.[1] Romulus speedily marched against the people of Cænina: he defeated them, killed their king Acron with his own hand, and stripped off his arms, which he dedicated as spolia opima in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius. Hence arose the custom when the Roman general slew the hostile general, of dedicating his spoils in this temple. The event, however happened only twice in Roman history after the deed of Romulus; viz., once when Cornelius Cossus slew the Veientine king Tolumnius, and again when Marcellus slew a king of the Gauls. Romulus then turned his arms against Antemnae; and having reduced this town, he returned with the spoil to Rome, and his army preceding him in a triumphal procession; and this was the origin of the Roman Triumph, so celebrated in later times. Romulus made these towns Roman colonies, by sending three hundred Roman colonists into each, and confiscating one third of the land for their use; while he removed them in the tribes and curiæ. Similar measures were adopted towards Crustumerium.

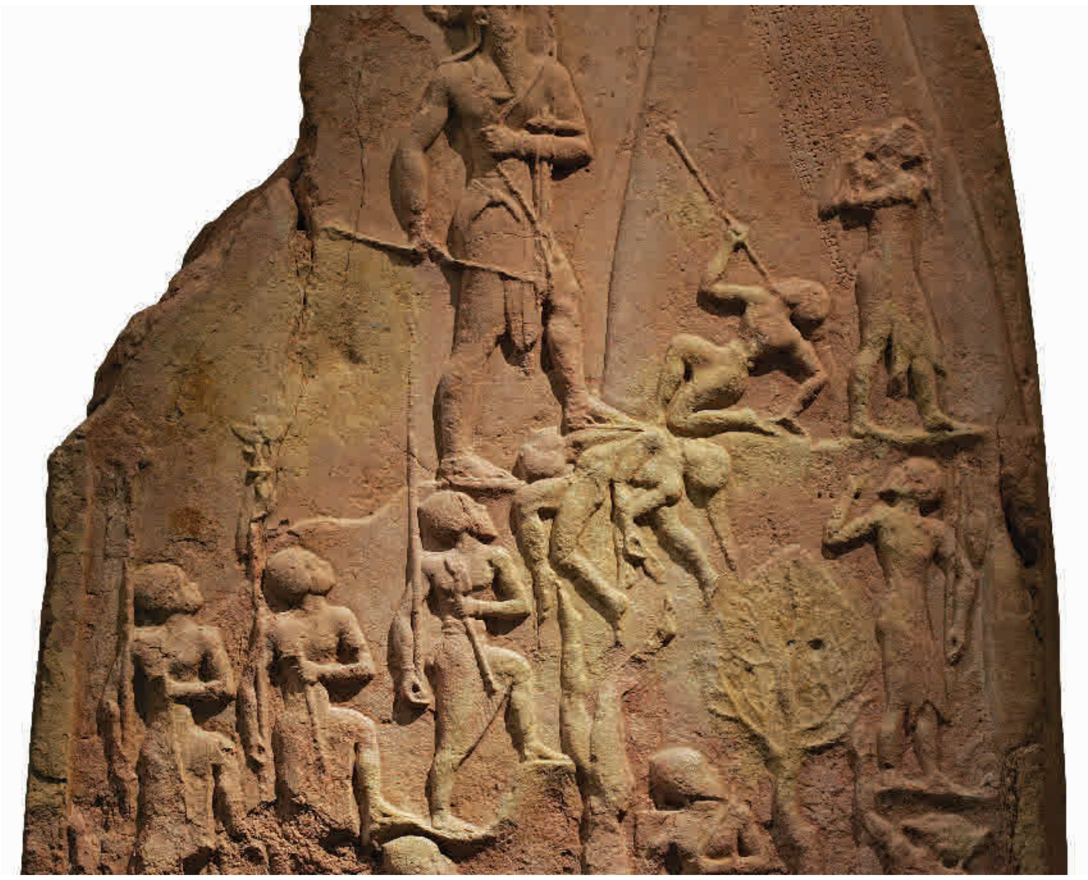
(adapted from the text: *An Inquiry into the Credibility of the Early Roman History*
by Sir George Cornewall Lewis)

Nicolas Poussin, *The Rape of the Sabine Women*, 1637.
Oil on canvas, 154 x 206 cm.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





Antiquity to Christianisation of the Roman Empire



The Victory Stele of Naram-Sin of Akkad

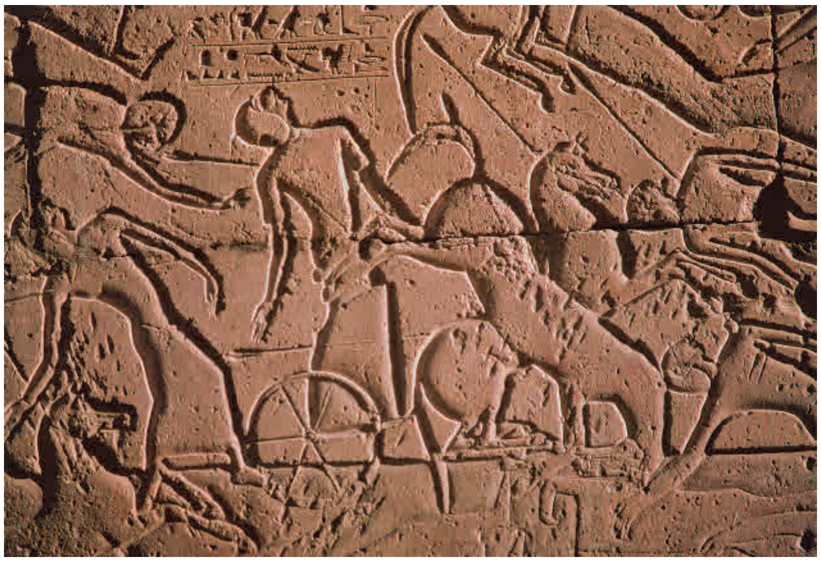
Sun Tzu said: In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to recapture an army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company entire than to destroy them. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 3, 1)

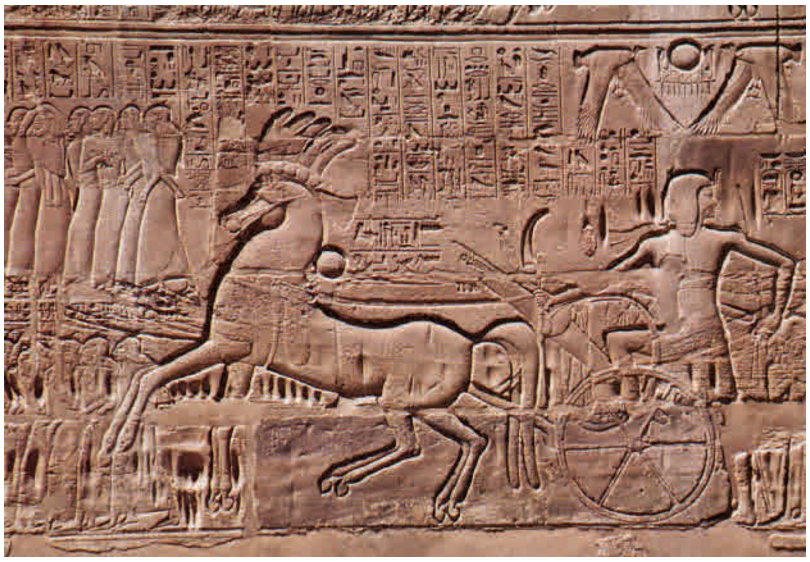
In reference to this most interesting stele of Naram-Sin we may here mention another inscription of this king, found quite recently at Susa and published only this year, which throws additional light on Naram-Sin's allies and on the empire which he and his grandfather Sargon founded. The new inscription was engraved on the base of a diorite statue. From the inscription we learn that Naram-Sin was head of a confederation of nine chief allies, or vassal princes, and waged war on his enemies with their assistance. Among these nine allies of course the Princes of Sidurm Saluni and Lulubi are to be included. The new text further records that Naram-Sin made an expedition against Magan (the Sinaitic peninsula), and defeated Manium, the lord of that region, and that he cut blocks of stone and transported them to his city of Agade, where from one of them he made the statue on the base of which the text was inscribed. It was already known from the so-called "Omens of Sargon and Naram-Sin" that Naram-Sin had made an expedition to Sinai in the course of his reign and had conquered the king of the country. The new text gives contemporary confirmation of this assertion and furnishes us with additional information with regard to the name of the conquered ruler of Sinai and other details of the campaign.

(adapted from: *History of Egypt, Chaldea, Syria, Babylonia, and Assyria in the Light of Recent Discovery* by L. W. King and H. R. Hall)

Standard of Ur, "War" panel (detail), 2600 BCE.
Mosaic in wooden frame, 21.6 x 49.5 cm. British Museum, London. (pp. 24-25)

Victory Stele of Naram-Sin, c. 2350-2000 BCE.
Limestone, 200 x 150 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photographer: Wikimedia Commons user Rama.





Battle of Kadesh

(1274 BCE)

He will conquer who has learnt the artifice of deviation. Such is the art of manoeuvring. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 22)

The Battle of Kadesh saw the Hittite empire of Muwatalli II face the Egyptian Empire under Ramses II. After the first attack, Ramses claims in his first account of the battle, the "Poem", that he renewed the action the next morning. Describing the battle in brief, vague, and purely conventional terms, he represents Ramses as victorious, then states that the Hittite king sued for peace in a humble letter to Ramses. The Hittite king may possibly have proposed a cessation of hostilities, but this is doubtful. To state that in the battle of the second day, he "was on the point of perishing", or to refer to "the surrender of Qodshu" (Kadesh) is pure romancing. For the first statement there is not a particle of evidence; and not even the Poem has the face to claim that Kadesh was captured. For sixteen years after this battle, Ramses was obliged to maintain incessant campaigning in Syria, in order to stop the Hittite advance and wring from them a peace on equal terms. Meanwhile he evidently found compensation in the fame which his exploit at Kadesh brought him, for he had it recorded in splendid reliefs on all his greater temples and assumed among his titles in his royal titulary the proud epithet: "Prostrater of the lands and countries, while he was alone, having no other with him."

These movements show that already in the 14th century BCE, the commanders of the time understood the value of placing troops advantageously before battle; that they further already comprehended the immense superiority to be gained by clever manoeuvers masked from the enemy; and that they had therefore, even at this remote date, made contributions to that supposed science, which was brought to such perfection by Napoleon the science of winning the victory before the battle.

(adapted from: *The Battle of Qadeš* by J.H. Breasted)

Relief sculpture from the walls of the Beit-el-Wali temple of Ramesses II, New Kalabsha. Relief, c. 2134-661 BCE.

Ramesses II on his chariot at the Battle of Kadesh, relief sculpture from walls of the Beit-el-Wali temple of Ramesses II, New Kalabsha. Relief, c. 2134-661 BCE.

Battle of Marathon

(August/September, 490 BCE)

Now a soldier's spirit is keenest in the morning; by noonday it has begun to flag; and in the evening, his mind is bent only on returning to camp. A clever general, therefore, avoids an army when its spirit is keen, but attacks it when it is sluggish and inclined to return. This is the art of studying moods. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 28-29)

The Greeks had established colonies all along the coasts of Asia Minor, and through them much of the civilisation and something of the literature of Persia had drifted into the young confederacy. Presently Persia began to demand tribute of these colonies. The colonies resisted, and called for aid from the mother country, and a desultory warfare sprang up along the shores of Asia Minor. As a rule the Greeks were defeated. Persia's people were numerous, the colonists few, and their troops untrained irregulars, but the ill-feeling between Greece and Persia was rapidly becoming intensified.

And now King Darius rallied all his energies for a final effort. For this purpose the force which was assembled on the great plain of Cilicia and in the adjacent waters was simply overpowering. Six hundred armed triremes or ships of war with three banks of oars, and full as many transports for horse and foot, were moored along the shores, and in the spring of 490 BCE, the greatest flotilla and the most numerous army ever yet massed, even by mighty Persia, set sail for Greece.

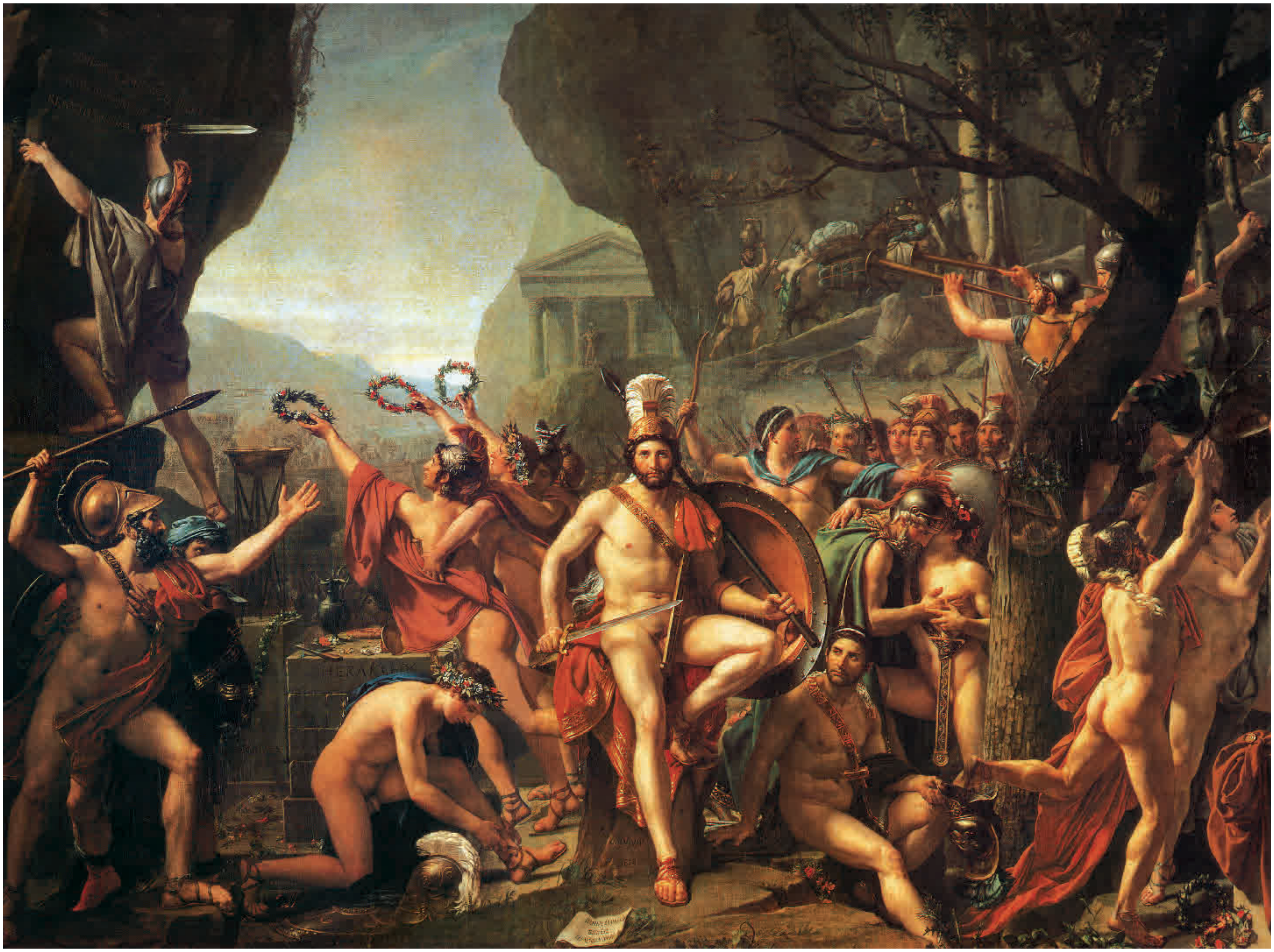
Late in August, unopposed, Median Datis disembarked his immense army upon the plain of Marathon, with the capital, Athens, only one day's march away. Then it was that the great men of Athens sprang to the fore, and foremost among them was Miltiades, the same who had won the enmity of Darius years before. The ordinary formation of the Athenian phalanx of that day was in eight ranks, but in order to cover the Persian front Miltiades was compelled to reduce the depth to four ranks. His plan was daring. Placing Callimachus in command of the right wing with massed phalanxes in heavy charging columns, the Plataeans and two Athenian tribes being similarly disposed on the left, he deployed his remaining troops between them in long, slender line of battle.

It must have been about three o'clock on the afternoon of the loth (probably) of August. Thousands of the Persian soldiery were dozing. Suddenly there comes a chorus of warning yells from the open plain, suddenly the camp rings from right to left with the wild blare of horns and trumpets sounding the alarm. There, midway to Pentelicus, with burnished helmet, shield, and spear, with ringing war-cry and serried ranks that sweep the full length of those of Asia, with perfect alignment and terrific impetus, for the first time in her history Greece come, charging at the run. Leaving camp, leaving all behind them, bent only on the annihilation of that daring foe, the Persian army of the centre is artfully enticed out upon the open plain. All too late Datis sees the fatal blunder. North and south the spearmen of Plataea and Athens have closed upon the surging mass of his best and bravest. On three sides the resistless infantry of Greece hems in the hapless Persians, and now the carnage begins.

Marathon checked at once the hopes and schemes of Darius, sent the discomfited fleet and army back to the shores of Asia, and roused the valor and enthusiasm of Greece to the highest pitch. For ten valuable and well-improved years the shores of Greece saw no more of the Persian invaders.

(adapted from: *Famous and decisive battles of the world* by C. King)

Persian Warriors, from the Archer's Frieze in Darius' palace in Susa, c. 510 BCE.
Glazed bricks.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Battle of Thermopylae

(11 August, 480 BCE)

The different measures suited to the nine varieties of ground: […] *When there is no place of refuge at all, it is desperate ground.* […] *On desperate ground, I would proclaim to my soldiers the hopelessness of saving their lives.* (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 41/45/50)

After Marathon, King Darius seems to have been stunned by the force of the blow; the aim of his life became the utter humiliation and conquest of Greece.

Darius had named as his successor his younger son, Xerxes, and confided to him the execution of his plans. Just five years after Marathon, Xerxes took up the sceptre. Then Mardonius became one of his chief counsellors and urged him to set forth on the march to Greece.

Twelve hundred ships of war formed his fleet and over a million men his army. The campaign, thus begun, was made further memorable by two great feats in engineering – the bridging of the Hellespont by means of boats, and the digging of a ship canal through the Isthmus back of Mount Athos.

Just at sunrise one balmy spring morning in the year 480 BCE, the great army of Xerxes began the crossing, the fighting force taking the upper bridge, the trains, cattle, and camp-followers the lower; and for seven days and nights, lashed actually into the utmost rapidity of march, the soldiery poured over in ceaseless stream.

An attempt was made to check him in the narrow pass of the Vale of Tempe, but the army sent thither under Themistocles speedily found that the position would be untenable because of the open sea to the right. With his matchless fleet Xerxes could land thousands in their rear, and Themistocles fell back. Only one point was known to exist where a stand might successfully be made – Thermopylae.

At Thermopylae itself King Leonidas of Sparta, with 300 picked men from his own city and a force of about 6,000 troops from other Grecian states, sprang forward and seized the pass. It was just about the end of June. Then one bright morning, around 1 July, the assault began. The attempt is simply madness. Fresh and vigorous comrades fill the places of the weary men in the foremost ranks of Sparta, and the sun goes down upon a scene of carnage for which Xerxes can find no excuse whatever. Yet he [Xerxes] orders the attack to be resumed on the morrow, and the morrow is but a repetition of the first day. Approached from the front, Leonidas was invincible. Was there no other way?

But treachery had been at work. On the third day the bitter tidings reached Leonidas that his heroic defence had been in vain. Treachery had turned the pass. The Persians were to his rear. There was yet time to escape. To Leonidas and his Spartans desertion of the position they had been detailed to defend meant dishonour. The Spartan king with his brave 300, with some 700 Thespians and a handful of Thebans, stood to their ground. For a time it seems as though nothing can stand before them, but the sun is setting now, and in the dust and grime of battle one after another the heroes of the little band are falling. Too superb to surrender, but daring and defiant to the last they sell their storied lives, and only when the life-blood of the last is drained is Thermopylae won. There was now nothing left to check the onward march of the Asiatic conqueror towards Athens.

(adapted from: *Famous and decisive battles of the world* by C. King)

Jacques Louis David, *Leonidas at Thermopylae*, 1814.
Oil on canvas, 395 x 531 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Battle of Mantinea
(4 July, 362 BCE)

We can form a single united body, while the enemy must split up into fractions. Hence there will be a whole pitted against separate parts of a whole, which means that we shall be many to the enemy's few. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 6, 14)

Nine years after Leuctra, Thebes and Sparta again met in battle far more important in point of numbers engaged and in its results. Leuctra is memorable as the first battle fought on the new tactical ideas introduced by Epaminondas; Mantinea as the last he ever fought, and the end of Theban supremacy.

About four miles south of Mantinea the mountains east and west seem to send out a long spur, forming a ridge across the plain, through which, about the middle, was a depression, and through this depression ran the road from Tegea to Mantinea. Along this ridge, facing south, was formed the army of Sparta and her allies, old King Agesilaus of Sparta being himself present. The entire force numbered probably about 22,000 men, of whom 2,000 were cavalry.

And now Epaminondas (who had been resting his men within the walls of Tegea after the rapid march required in the attempted surprise of Sparta and Mantinea) determined upon a pitched battle with his antagonists. Both armies were filled with long tried and hardy soldiers; both were confident of success, and eager for the coming battle.

Epaminondas marched squarely up the road towards the centre of the enemy's position. He was aiming so as to march between the right flank of the Spartans and the mountains to the west. Here he halted his men, closed their ranks, and then, deliberately facing them to their right, toward the east that is, he commanded "ground arms;" and the wondering army of Lacedaemon came to the conclusion that Thebes did not mean to fight that day. At the same instant the signal "Take arms!" rang along the Theban line, and the ready soldiers seized shield and spear, awaiting the signal to advance.

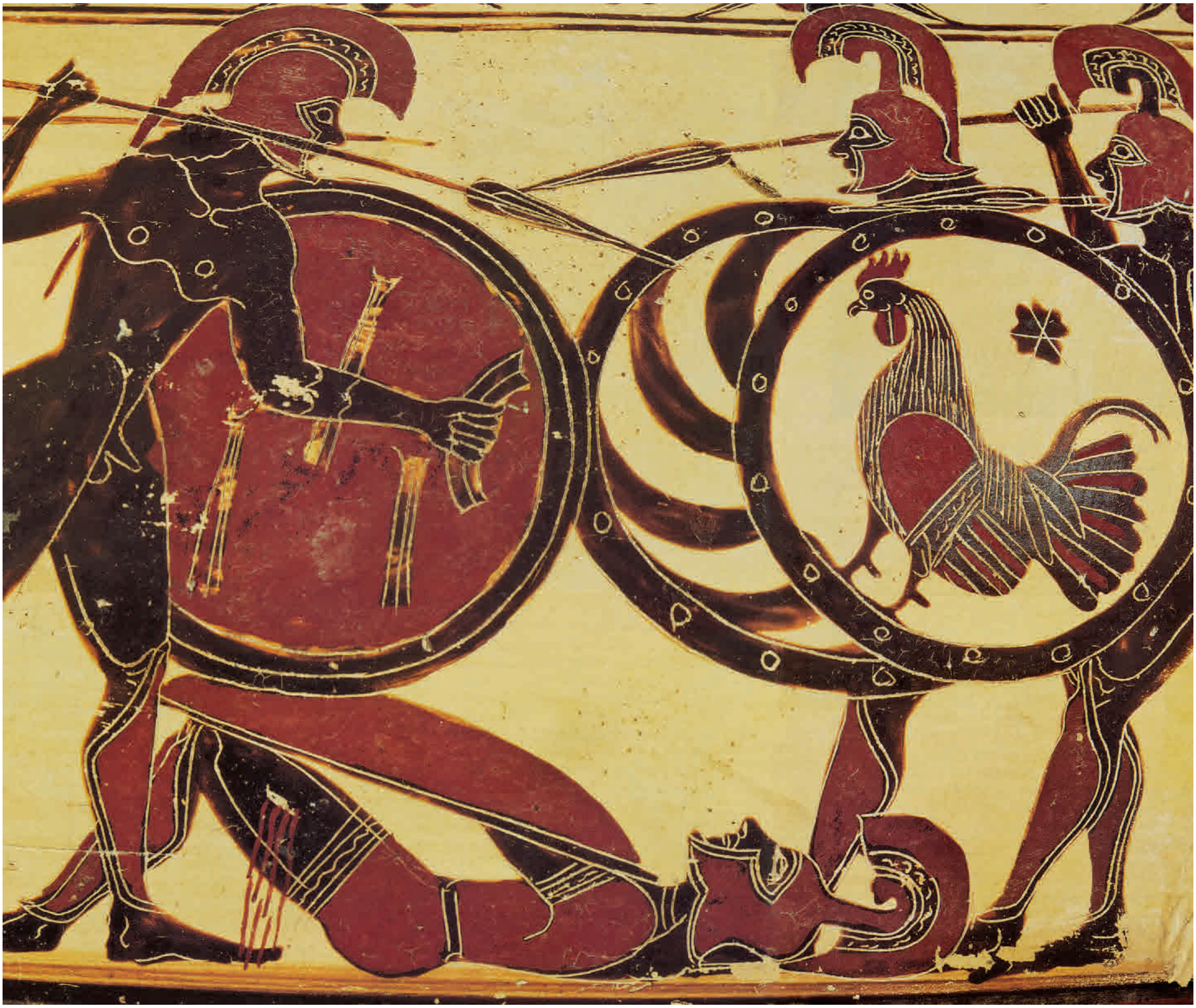
And now, in haste and confusion, the allies of the Peloponnesus run to their places in ranks. In three minutes the Peloponnesian horsemen are tumbled over the plain or sent scattering off to the rear. Meanwhile the infantry has formed its lines, eight deep, and yet the men have barely got their places before the phalanx is upon them. The shock is irresistible. In vain Spartans and Mantineans throw themselves upon the wall of shields. Then the Theban cavalry falls upon the flank of the Mantineans, and at last, as the head of the phalanx bursts through the opposing masses, the Spartans had to turn, had to run. In consternation at the utter rout of Sparta they too fall back before triumphant foemen, and the whole army of the Peloponnesus is in full retreat.

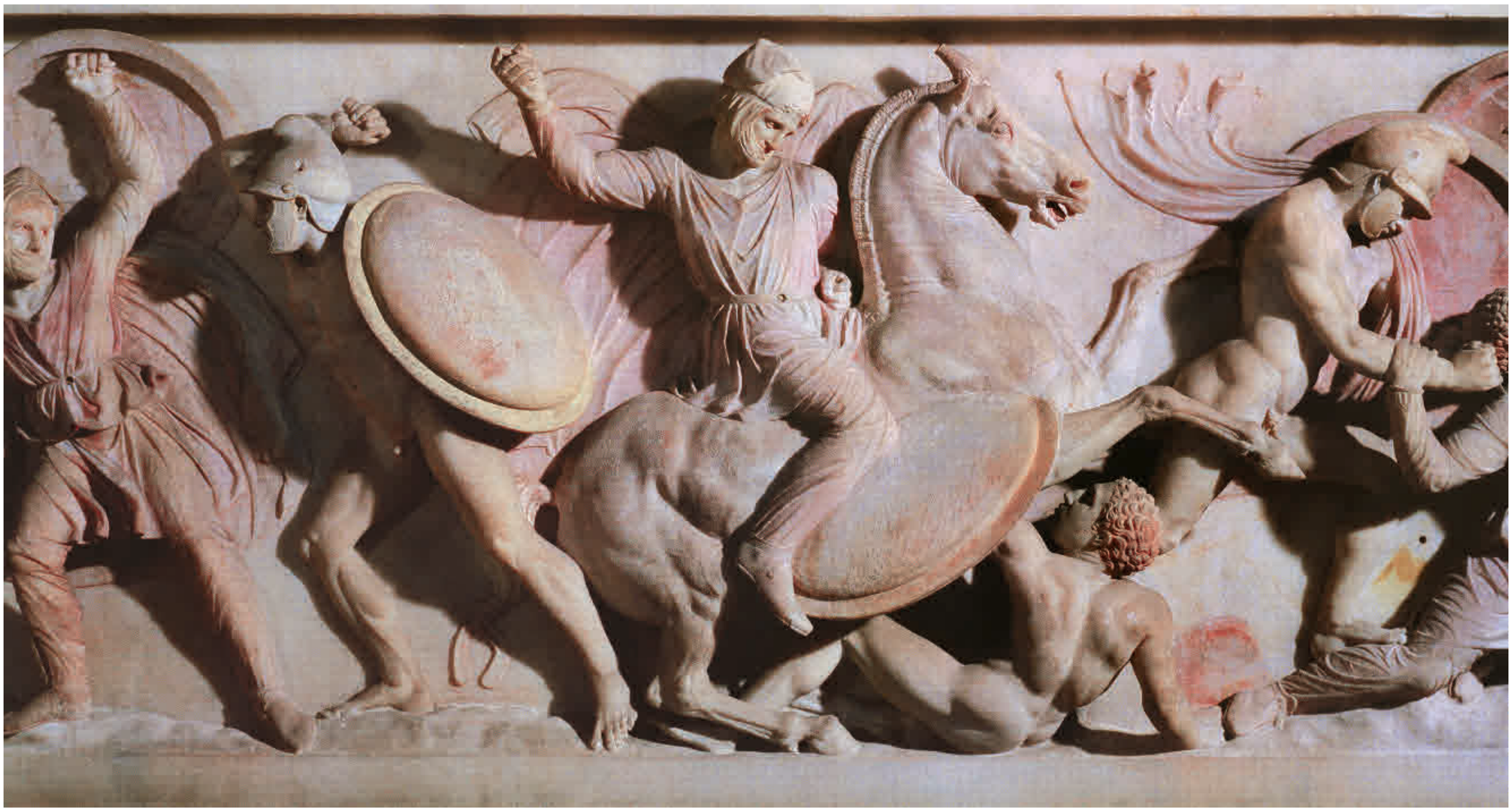
But at what cost? Pressing forward in the ardor of pursuit, after killing a Spartan officer in hand-to-hand conflict, Epaminondas receives a thrusting spear full in the breast, and is brought to earth.

Epaminondas felt that his wound was mortal. Then he called for the two officers whom he most trusted, and to one of whom he probably intended to delegate the command. Both had been killed in the charge. "Then you must make peace with the enemy," said he, for there was now no-one left who was competent to command. Then he directed the spear-head to be withdrawn, and with it the life went out of the greatest soldier Greece had yet known. With it the power of Thebes departed. Peace was signed on the basis of an independence of the separate states, and the era of Epaminondas was over.

(adapted from: *Famous and decisive battles of the world* by C. King)

Eurytos-Krater, c. 600 BCE.
Corinthian black-figure vase, 46 x 28.2 x 46.5 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.





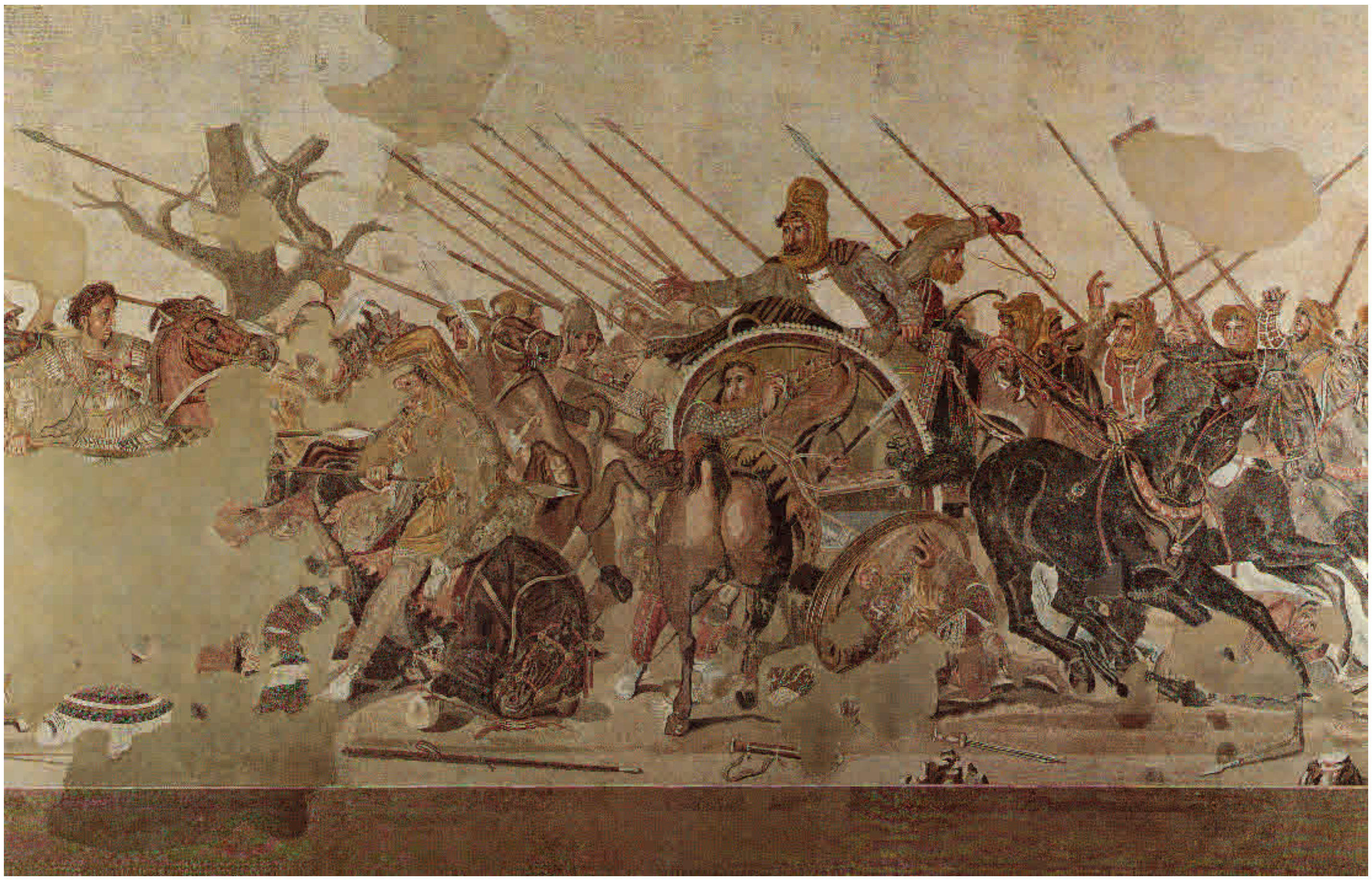
The Campaigns of Alexander the Great

(335-323 BCE)

Alexander III of Macedon, son of Philip II of Macedon and Olympia of Epirus, had been groomed since childhood for the political and military duties of a Macedonian prince. Furthermore, his mother had instilled in him the sense of being destined for great deeds – a conviction that would later become a crucial factor in Alexander's motivation to create the largest empire the world had ever seen. In his youth he accompanied Philip II into battle and later proved himself to be an able leader when he efficiently quelled rebellions in the absence of his father who was away fighting the people of Byzantion. The opportunity to set everything in motion to achieve his destiny arose when Philip was assassinated by one of his own bodyguards, Pausanias, who may have acted because of an old grievance or due to being manipulated by Olympia or even Alexander himself. It comes as little surprise that Alexander, almost immediately following his proclamation as King of Macedon, rallied his troops to conquer the Persian Empire. Before he embarked on his historical conquest however, he set out to pacify greater Greece in order to secure the borders of his kingdom and leave a stable kingdom behind.

In 334 BCE, Alexander crossed the Hellespont into Asia Minor, which required a large fleet of triremes and several crossings. His initial push into the Persian Empire was met with hardly any opposition as Darius III seemed to have thought of Alexander as little more than a nuisance. The first major engagement between the Greeks and Persians was fought at the banks of the Granicus River and led to a Persian defeat. This victory and Darius' inaction subsequently led to many of Persia's satrapies to surrender to the Macedonian king as

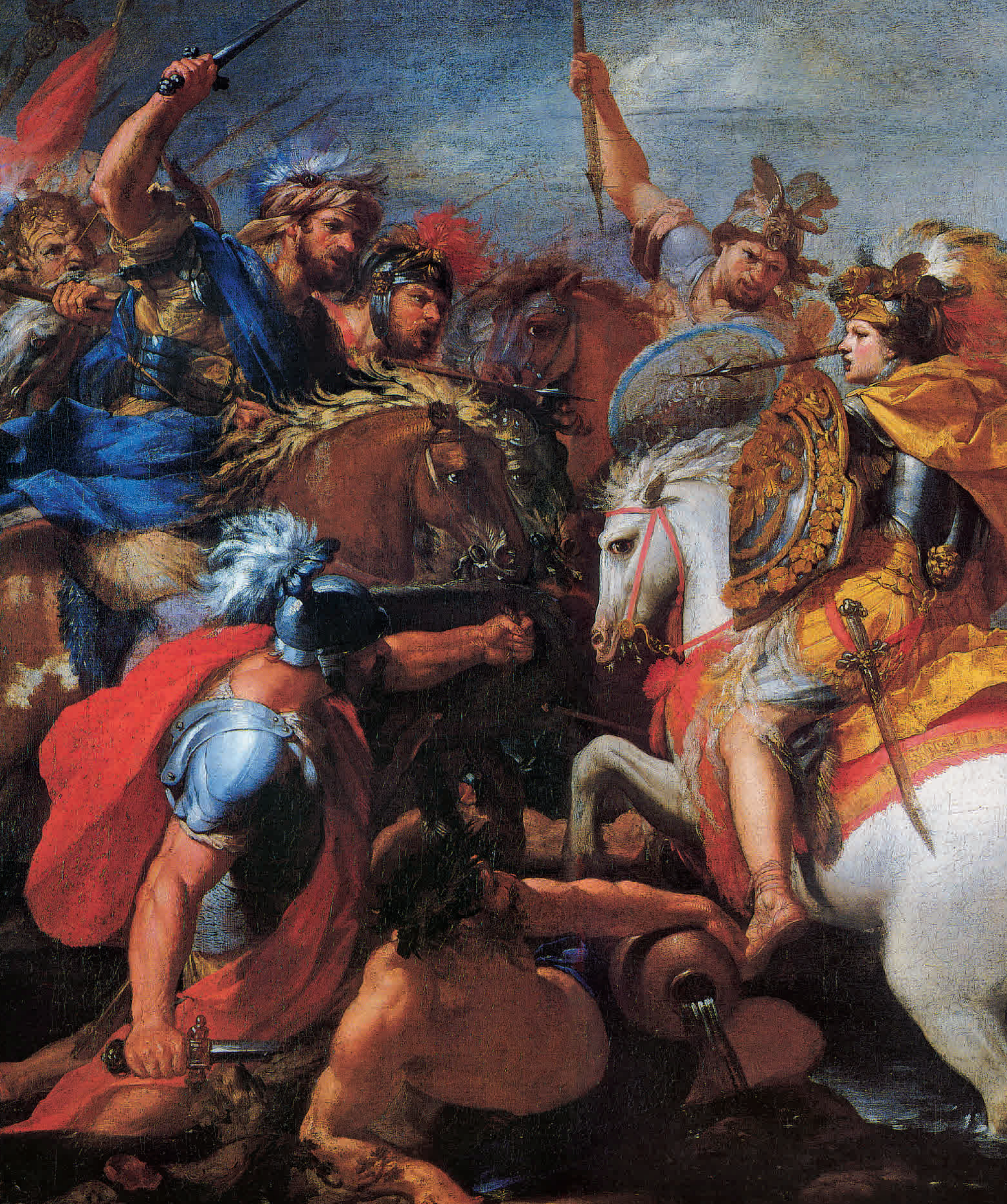
Alexander at the Battle of Issus, detail from the Alexander Sarcophagus, late 4th century BCE.
Marble, 195 x 318 x 167 cm.
Istanbul Archeology Museum, Istanbul.

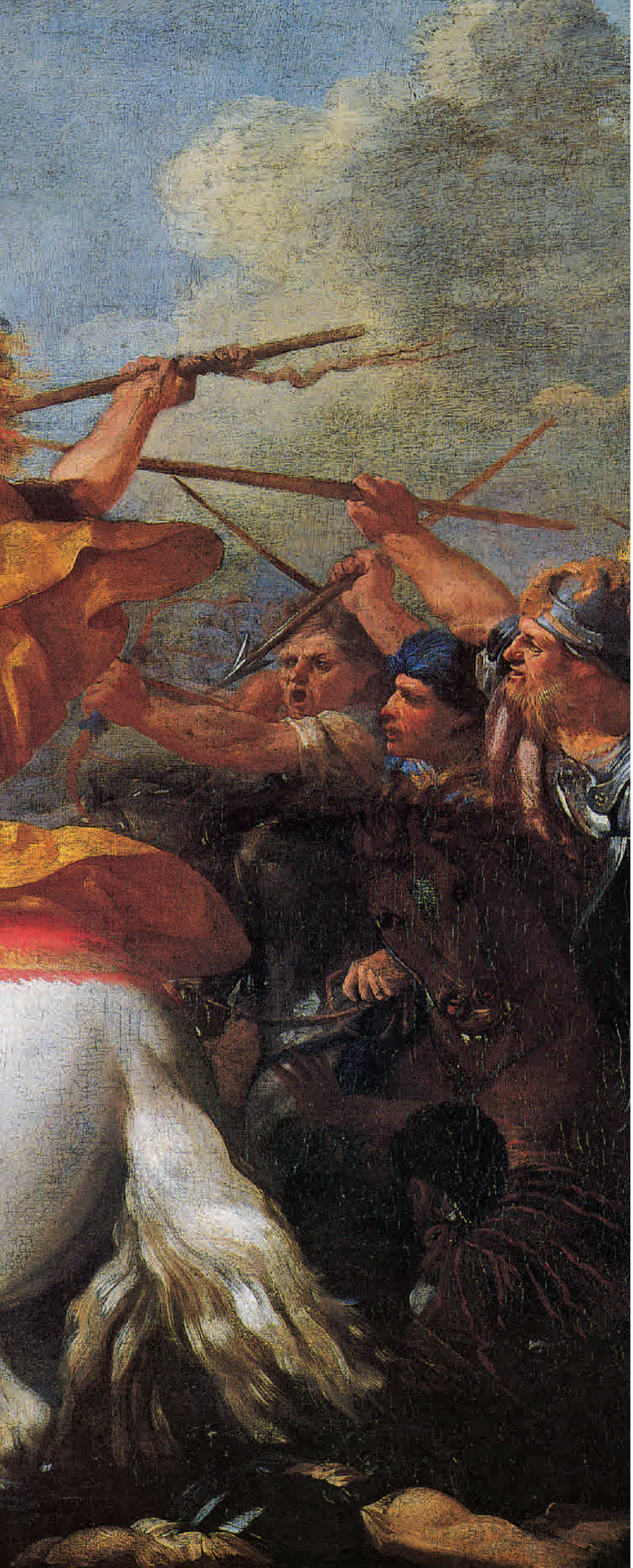


soon as he was in sight of a city or township. Alexander continued his conquest of the Persian Empire and was, largely due to his own strategic abilities but also because of his enemies' miscalculations and bad decisions, successful, defeating the Persians under Darius' direct command in the Battles of Issus and Gaugamela and at the Persian Gates where the army made its last stand. After Darius' death at the hands of his trusted eunuchs, Alexander declared himself the emperor of Persia and married one of the daughters of the deceased king. Alexander was at that time the monarch of three lands, as Egypt had earlier welcomed him with open arms and declared him the incarnation of their major deities.

Since it always had been Alexander's declared intent to conquer the "known world" – which ended somewhere east of India during his age –, he then set his sights on the Indian subcontinent. Initially he was able to sway one of the Indian rulers to put himself under Alexander's rule and decimate those tribes that refused to join him, but soon after his march into India slowed. The Greek was still able to beat the Punjabi ruler Porus in the famous Battle of Hydaspes, but due to the mutiny of his army, who refused to engage the large armies of the Nanda Empire after having fought hard in the last battle, he had to give up on his plan and returned to Persia. Alexander was still planning to continue his campaigns when he returned, but was never able to implement any of those plans as he died in Babylon, either because of an illness or possibly after being poisoned. After a short period of stability, his empire erupted in a succession war that lasted forty years and ended Alexander's dream of the largest empire of the known world.

The Alexander Mosaic, from the House of the Faun in Pompeii, c. 150-100 BCE.
Mosaic, 582 x 313 cm.
Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples.





Battle of the Granicus River

(May, 334 BCE)

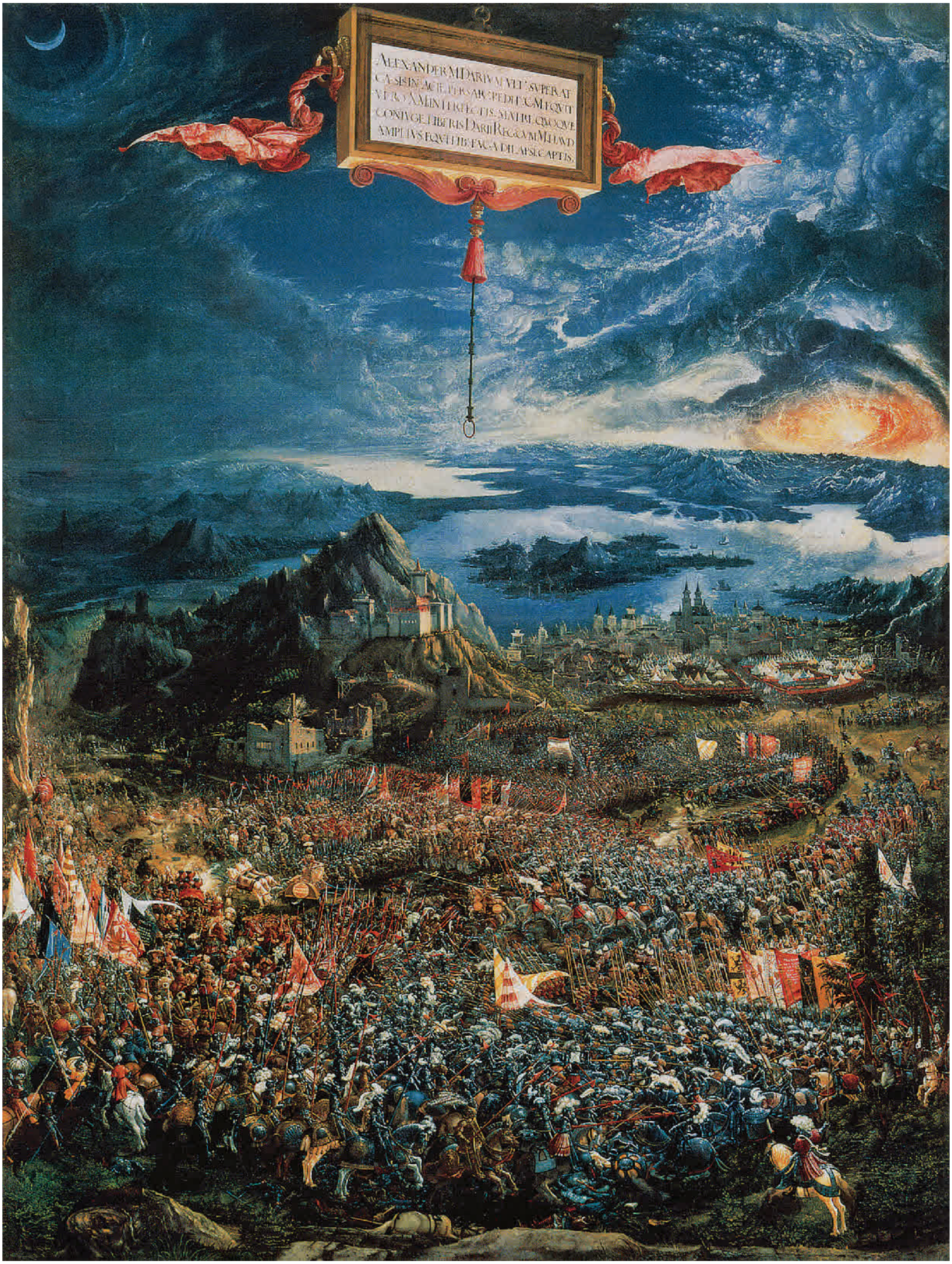
Let your rapidity be that of the wind, your compactness that of the forest. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 17)

In the year 334 BCE, Alexander arrived on the banks of the Granicus [now known as the Biga Çayı], a narrow, deep, and rapid stream in northern Asia. On the opposite side of the river was stationed the Persian army, which Darius, had sent thither to intercept his progress. The two armies remained in sight of each other a long time, as if dreading the event. At length, Alexander, impatient at the delay, took the command of the right wing of his army, and placing the left under the command of Parmenio, plunged into the stream. The trumpets sounded, and his troops leaped into the river after him. Surrounded by the flower of his army, Alexander madly buffeted the rushing current, and made rapid progress toward the enemy.

At length the centre of the Persian cavalry began to give ground, and immediately the two wings were broken and put to flight. Alexander did not pursue them far, but turned about to attack the Persian foot, which was engaged with his infantry. The Persians who had received the first attack of the Macedonians with firminess, upon the arrival of Alexander and his cavalry, instantly turned and fled. The Grecian infantry in Darius's service alone remained. Alexander instantly rushed with his troops into the mass of the Greeks who made a vigorous resistance. Their desperate condition caused them to fight with an energy almost superhuman; but crushed by the superior numbers of their enemies, they were all cut to pieces except 2,000, who were taken prisoners.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Alexander the Great Crossing the Granicus,
17th century. Oil on canvas.
Private collection.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Battle of Issus

(5 November, 333 BCE)

If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 1, 22)

In 333 BCE, Darius, King of Persia, at the head of an immense army, marched toward the Euphrates, full of confidence that he could crush the invader, Alexander, as he would an obnoxious insect. With his immense army, Darius continued his march across the plains of Assyria. In the meantime, Alexander had heard that Darius was encamped at Sochos, in Assyria, two days' journey from Cilicia. He immediately held a council of war and all his generals and officers intreated him to lead them against the enemy. Alexander arrived at Issus, left his sick in that city, and marching his whole army through the pass, encamped near Myriandros, a Syrian city. Darius, having sent his treasure to Damascus, a city of Syria, marched in a westerly direction a short distance into Cilicia, then turned toward Issus. He arrived not knowing that Alexander was behind him, for he had been assured that this prince had fled before him. On learning that Alexander had passed into Syria, he barbarously put to death all the sick that were in the city, except a few soldiers, whom he dismissed, after making them view every part of his camp, in order that they might inform Alexander of the prodigious multitude of his forces. The latter could scarcely believe the report of the magnitude of the king's army. He immediately made preparations to march to meet the Persians. At daybreak, the following morning, the army arrived at the place where Alexander had determined to engage the enemy.

Having heard that Alexander was marching toward him in battle array, Darius advanced with his army to meet him. Darius made his cavalry cross the river again, and dispatched the greater part of them toward the sea, against Parmenio, because they could fight on that spot with greater advantage. Alexander, observing the enemy's movements, began immediately to transform his battle organisation, behind his battalions in order to prevent their being seen by the enemy.

Alexander performed the duty both of a commander and a private soldier, wishing nothing so ardently as the glory of killing with his own hand, Darius, who, was seated on a high chariot. Many of the Persian nobility were killed. The horses that drew Darius's chariot, being quite covered with wounds, began to prance about, and shook the yoke so violently that they were on the point of overturning the king, who, afraid of falling alive into the hands of the enemy, leaped down, and mounted another chariot. The rest of the Persians observing this, fled as fast as possible, and throwing down their arms made the best of their way. Alexander had received a slight wound in the thigh; but happily it was not attended with ill consequences.

The Macedonians also signalised themselves with the utmost bravery, in order to preserve the advantage which Alexander had just before gained, and support the honour of their phalanx, which had always been considered invincible. The Macedonians lost 121 of their best officers, among whom was Ptolemy, the son of Seleucus, who had all behaved with the utmost gallantry.

The routing of the Persian cavalry completed the defeat of the army. The Persians lost in this battle 100,000 men, while the historian relates that Alexander lost only 150 horses and 300 infantry. But the Macedonian loss must have been much greater.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Albrecht Altdorfer, *The Battle of Alexander at Issus*, 1529.
Oil on panel, 158.4 cm x 120.3 cm.
Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

Battle of Arbela (Battle of Gaugamela)

(October, 331 BCE)

Success in warfare is gained by carefully accommodating ourselves to the enemy's purpose. By persistently hanging on the enemy's flank, we shall succeed in the long run in killing the commander-in-chief. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 60-61)

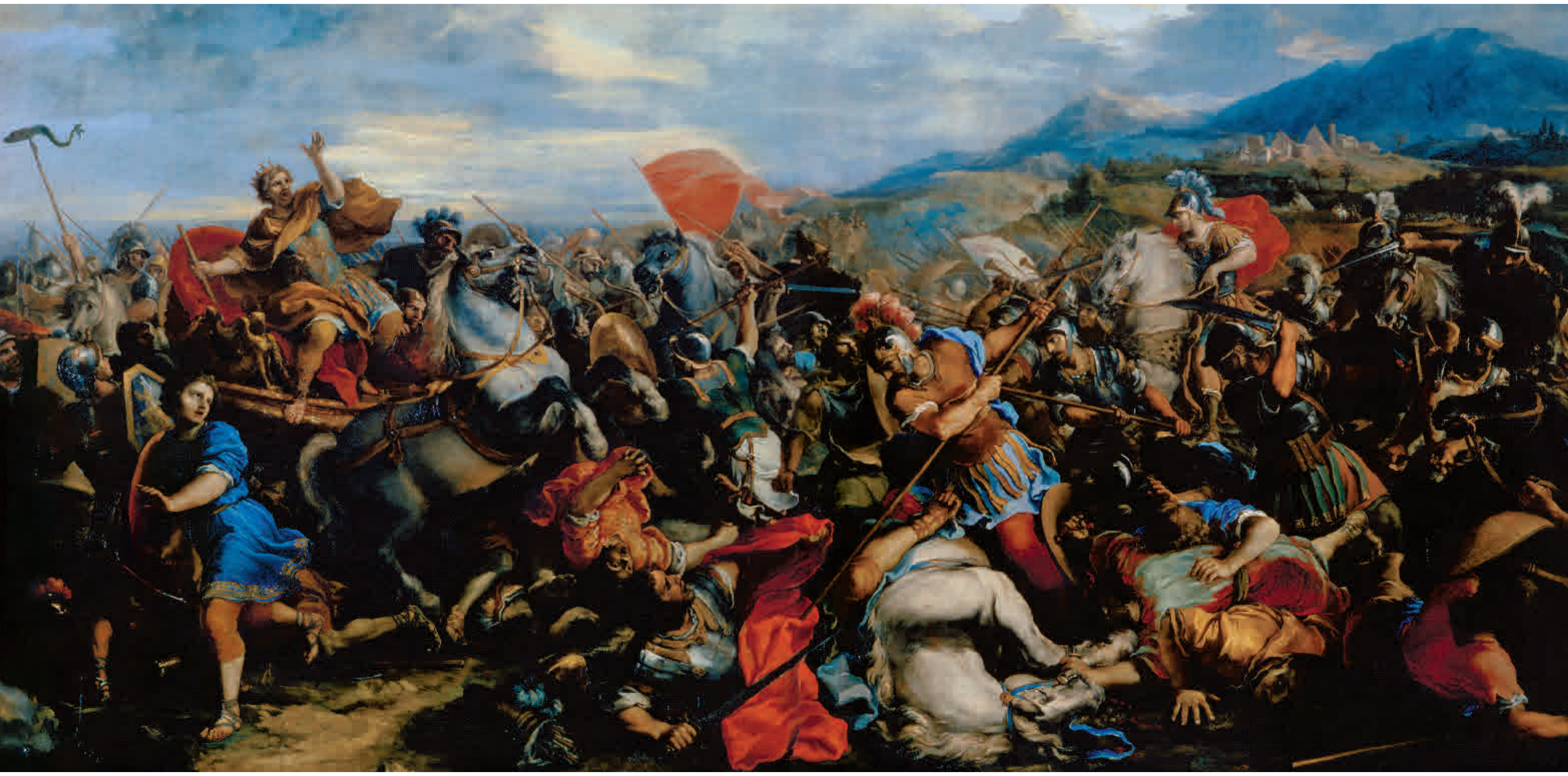
Alexander spent the night before the Battle of Arbela in consultation with the diviner Aristander, and in sacrificing to the god Fear. Thus prayed Alexander as his gaze rested upon the moving plain gleaming with a million torchlights where Darius, prepared for a night attack, was reviewing his forces. And well might Alexander so pray. After the sacrifice to the god Fear, as Plutarch gravely assures us, Alexander seemed jubilant in spirit, and returning to his tent, made ready to take his rest. Parmenio, his oldest and ablest general, sought him there and suggested that a night attack be made, urging that their army would grow faint at heart could they see as in broad daylight the countless hosts arrayed against them. In conclusion Parmenio respectfully said, "And if I were Alexander I would attack the Persians tonight." To this Alexander ironically replied "And so would I if I were Parmenio." On further remonstrance being made, Alexander curtly replied, "I will not steal a victory." At this Parmenio withdrew and Alexander lay down to rest.

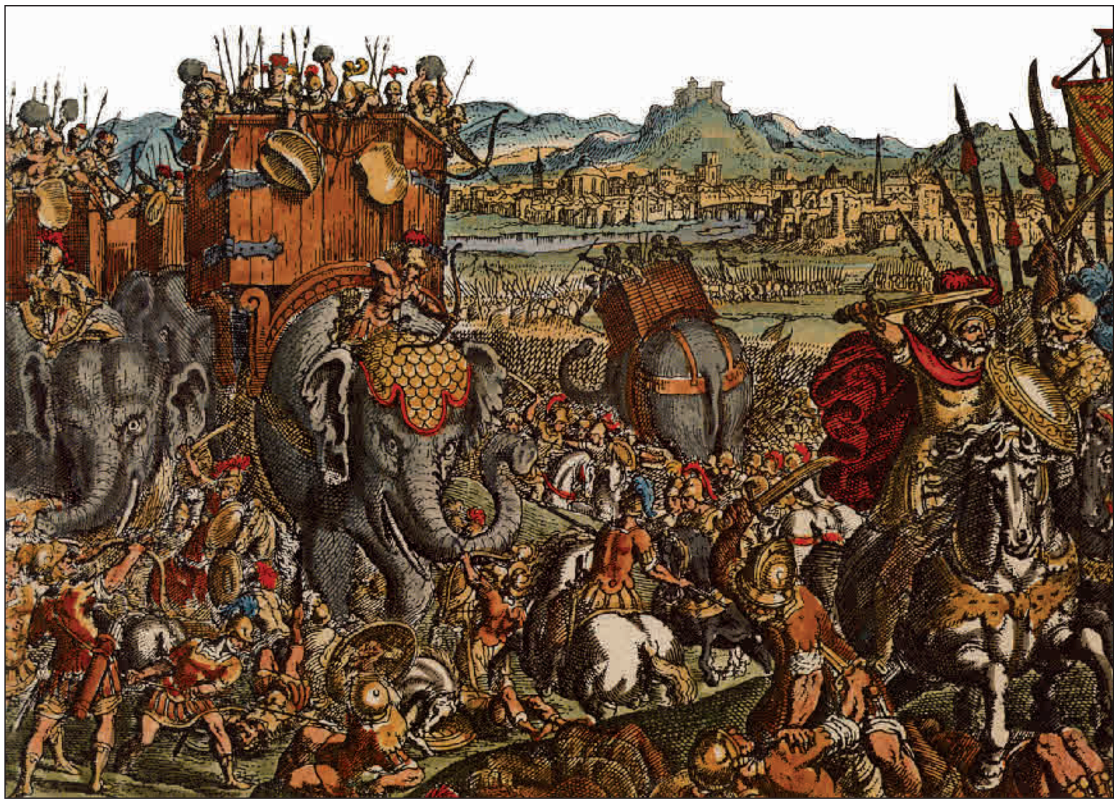
A profound and most refreshing sleep came to Alexander. Morning dawned and it seemed proper to rouse the men to breakfast and to preparation for battle, but Alexander still slept. But at last, time not giving them leave to wait any longer, Parmenio went to his bedside and called him twice or thrice by his name, till he waked him, and then asked how it was possible, when he was to fight the most important battle of all, he could sleep so soundly as if he were already victorious. "And are we not so, indeed," replied Alexander smiling, "since we are at last relieved from the trouble of wandering in pursuit of Darius thro' a wide and wasted country, hoping in vain, that he would fight us?" Alexander's full front battle line was not so long as Darius' centre. And this so seemingly fatal arrangement yet turned out to be most favourable for Alexander. For instead of attacking the Persian centre where Darius commanded in person and where the ground in front had been smoothed and prepared for the rush of the three hundred scythe-chariots, Alexander attacked vigourously the left wing driving them in front of and towards the centre. The onslaught of the Macedonian phalanx was irresistible and the Persian army, dominated by the god Fear, was in panic rout before Darius could get his unwieldy forces full into action or send forth the chariots upon which he so much relied. Alexander pursued the fleeing enemy until urged back by messengers from Parmenio saying his wing was surrounded by the Persians. Alexander reluctantly returned and full victory for the Macedonian army was soon proclaimed upon the field.

Darius, seeing that he was unable either to advance or to turn back, hastily leaped from his seat and seizing a riderless mare, he galloped as best he could over the bodies of the dying and the dead and thus escaped from the battlefield. The break in the friendship between Alexander and his ablest general, Parmenio, began with the Battle of Arbela. Was there jealousy, cruel as the grave, in the heart of the older man as he saw success after success crown the brow of the young commander? Granicus, Issus, Arbela – Europe, Asia, Africa, the world – had gone down successively under the Conqueror.

(adapted from: *Battles of Destiny* by I. Shepperson)

Jacques Courtois, *The Battle of the Arbelles*, 17th century.
Oil on canvas, 188 x 328 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.





Battle of Heraclea

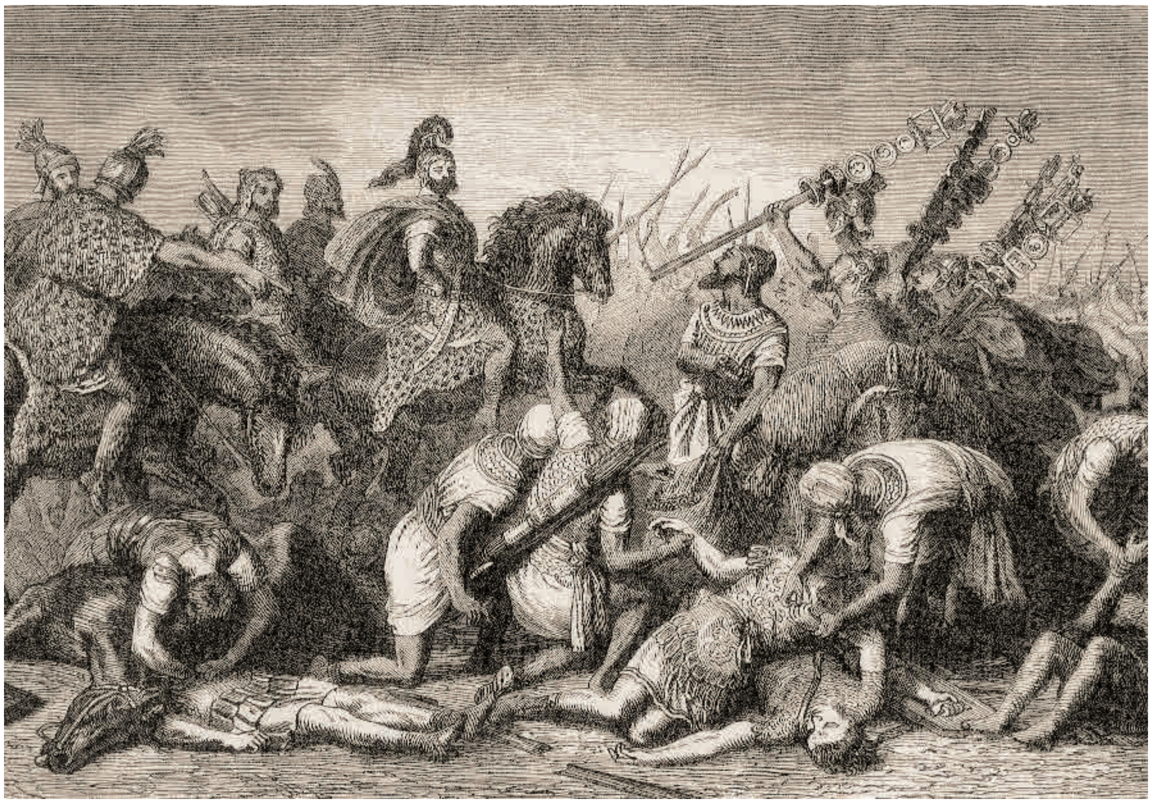
(July, 280 BCE)

Another such victory over the Romans, and we are undone. (Pyrrhus)

Pyrrhus advanced, and encamped in the plain between the cities of Pandosia and Heraclea, hoping to attack the Romans as they were coming over, scattered and disordered. But when he saw a vast number of shields appearing above the water, and the horse following them in good order, gathering his men in a closer body, himself at the head of them, he began the charge. While exposing his hands and body in the fight, and bravely repelling all that engaged him, he still guided the battle with steady and undisturbed reason. After being almost killed by a horseman, Pyrrhus used greater caution, and changed his scarf and his arms with Megacles, one of his friends, and, obscuring himself, as it were, in his, charged upon the Romans. The change of his arms was very opportune for the safety of his person, not having done so would have overthrown his cause and lost him the victory; for several falling upon Megacles, the first that gave him his mortal wound was one Dexous, who, snatching away his helmet and his robe and holding them up, said aloud he had killed Pyrrhus. These spoils being carried about and shown among the ranks, the Romans were transported with joy, and shouted aloud; while equal discouragement and terror prevailed among the Greeks, until Pyrrhus, understanding what had happened, rode about the army with his face bare, stretching out his hand to his soldiers, and telling them aloud it was he. At last, the elephants more particularly began to distress the Romans, whose horses, before they came near, not enduring them, went back with their riders; and upon this, he commanded the Thessalian cavalry to charge them in their disorder, and routed them with great loss.

(adapted from: *Parallel Lives* by Plutarch)

Battle of Heraclea, 17th century.
Book illustration.



Battle of Cannae

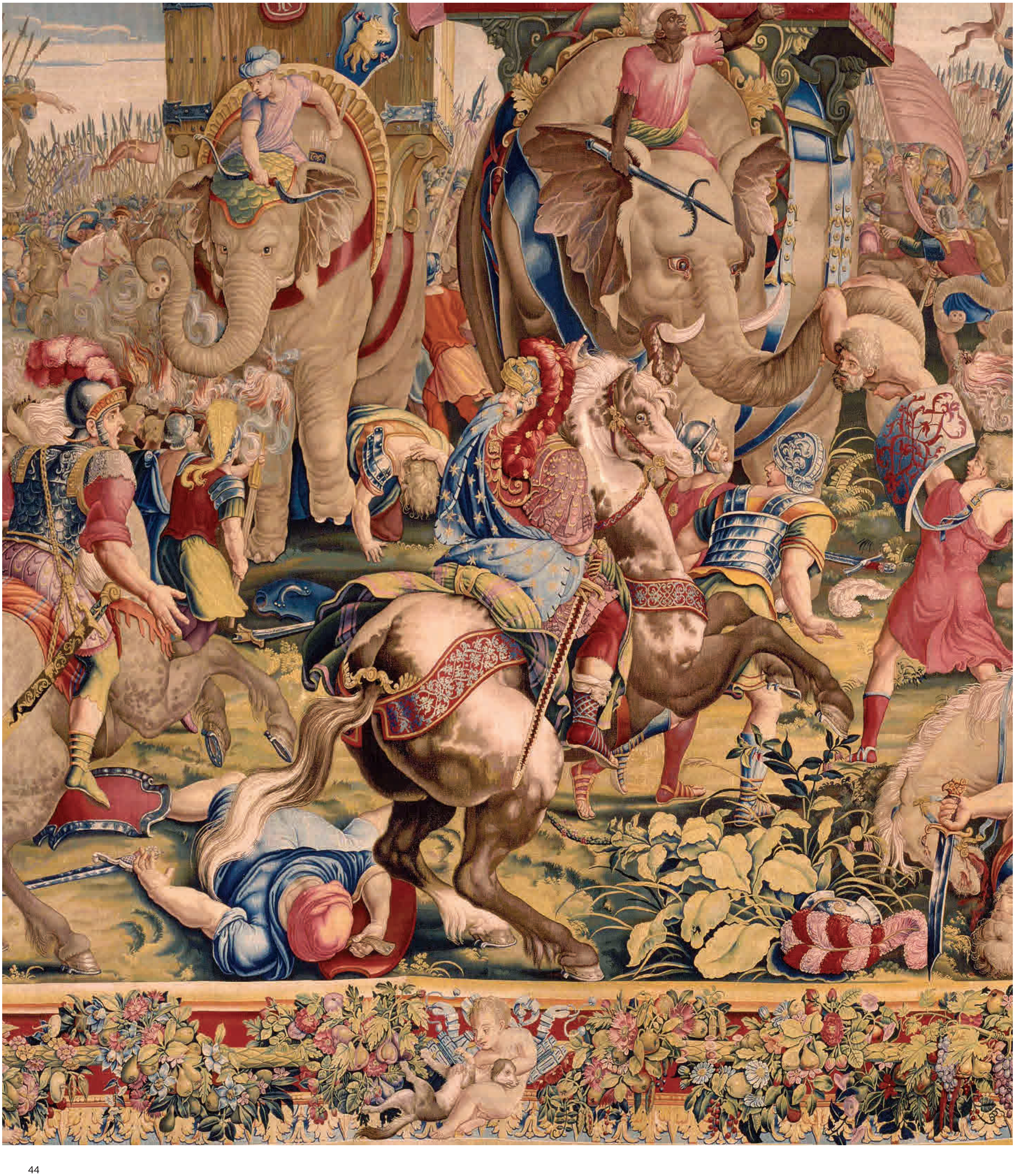
(2 August, 216 BCE)

Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 13)

As the Romans approached, Hannibal took a position bringing the wind behind him, which at that season blowing constantly one way, and carrying with it great clouds of dust from the parched plains behind, he knew must greatly distress the advancing enemy. The Carthaginian forces amounted to but sixty thousand. The consuls, on their arrival in sight of Hannibal's army, agreed to take the command on alternate days. Æmilius commanded on the first day, and judged it prudent not to attack the enemy. But the next day, Varro, without asking advice of his colleague, gave the signal for battle, and crossing a branch of the river Aufidus, that ran between the two armies, put his forces in array. The battle began with the light-armed infantry, the horse engaged next, but being unable to stand against Hannibal's Numidian cavalry, the legions came up to support them. The action now became general. The Romans attempted in vain to break the centre of their enemy's line, where the Gauls and Spaniards were stationed. Hannibal, observing this, ordered part of those troops to give way, and allow the Romans to advance till they were surrounded; chosen body of Africans then fell upon their flanks, and as they could make no effectual resistance, they were cut down. Varro made a desperate effort to remedy his fatal error; but the Africans, who were fresh and vigourous, easily maintained their advantage over his wearied soldiers. At length the rout became general throughout the Roman ranks; this was the greatest defeat that the Romans ever sustained. 70,000 men were killed on their side, and among these were so many knights, that it is said Hannibal sent to Carthage, as trophies, three bushels of gold rings, taken from their fingers.

(adapted from: *A Pictorial History of Ancient Rome* by S.G. Goodrich)

Hannibal stripping the dead Romans after battle, 19th century.
Engraving.



Battle of Zama
(19 October, 202 BCE)

By altering his arrangements and changing his plans, he keeps the enemy without definite knowledge. By shifting his camp and taking circuitous routes, he prevents the enemy from anticipating his purpose. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 37)

Scipio, after conquering all Spain, returned to Rome, and was appointed consul. Not content with the laurels he had already won, he determined upon an enterprise, which, if successful, should eclipse all his former victories. This was the conquest of Africa. Accordingly, he crossed over thither, and made it the seat of the war. The devastation of the country, the siege of Utica, one of oldest and most powerful cities of Phoenicia, the total defeat of the two armies – all these things forced the Carthaginians at last to turn their thoughts to peace. When the senators were introduced into the Roman general's tent, they all prostrated themselves before him, and humbly sued for peace. Scipio granted a truce to the Carthaginians, who immediately sent an express to Hannibal to order his return into Africa. Hannibal obeyed, and returned into Africa with all his forces, and encamped within a short distance of the Roman army, at Zama, which lies at the distance of five days' journey from Carthage.

The courage of the Carthaginians was increased by the presence of Hannibal, and they continually exhorted him to give battle at once to the Romans. But Hannibal, on the contrary, meditated peace. They met in an open space between the two armies; in sight of each other, these two generals, who were not only the most illustrious of their own age, but of all who have been recorded in any former time, both stood for some time silent, struck dumb as it were by mutual admiration. Hannibal could not prevail with himself to accept Scipio's conditions, and returned to his army with the resolution to decide the fate of Carthage by a general battle.

Scipio then placed his army in battle array; he did not, as usual, place the cohorts in close order, each before their own colours, but posted the companies at some distance from each other, that there might be room to admit the elephants of the enemy, without disturbing the ranks. Hannibal, in order to terrify the enemy, placed his elephants in the front. While they were thus engaged, Scipio gave the signal for battle. The trumpets and cornets were sounded, and the Romans raised such a shout, that the elephants, particularly in the left wing, were frightened at the sound, and turned back upon their own men. The Carthaginian line was therefore exposed on both flanks, not having the cavalry to cover them, when the infantry began to engage. At the very first onset the Carthaginian line gave way. The Romans thrust them back with their elbows and the bosses of their shields, and stepping forward into the places from which they had dislodged them, they gained ground rapidly.

At this critical juncture the cavalry under Lælius and Massinissa who had pursued the flying horse of the Carthaginians to some distance, returned, and charging the rear of the enemy, effectually routed them. Many were surrounded in the field and slain; while many who escaped into the open country adjoining were pursued and slain by the Roman cavalry. Hannibal escaped during the confusion, with a few horsemen, and fled to Hadrumetum. This battle closed the Punic war. The Carthaginians accepted the conditions dictated by Scipio, and peace was declared.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

After a design by **Giulio Romano**,
Tapestry of the History of Scipio: the Battle of Zama, 1688-1689.
Low-warp wool and silk tapestry, 435 x 740 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Siege and Fall of Carthage

(c. 149-146 BCE)

But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 12, 21)

The Romans, jealous of the power of their rivals, commenced the third Punic war with the determination that it should end only with the total ruin and destruction of their beautiful city. No words can express the terror and dismay which filled the hearts of the people of Carthage, when they learned the immovable determination of the Romans to destroy their city. As they had delivered all their weapons to the Romans they now applied themselves to the making of arms with incredible dexterity and expedition. Palaces, temples, markets, and squares were all turned into so many arsenals.

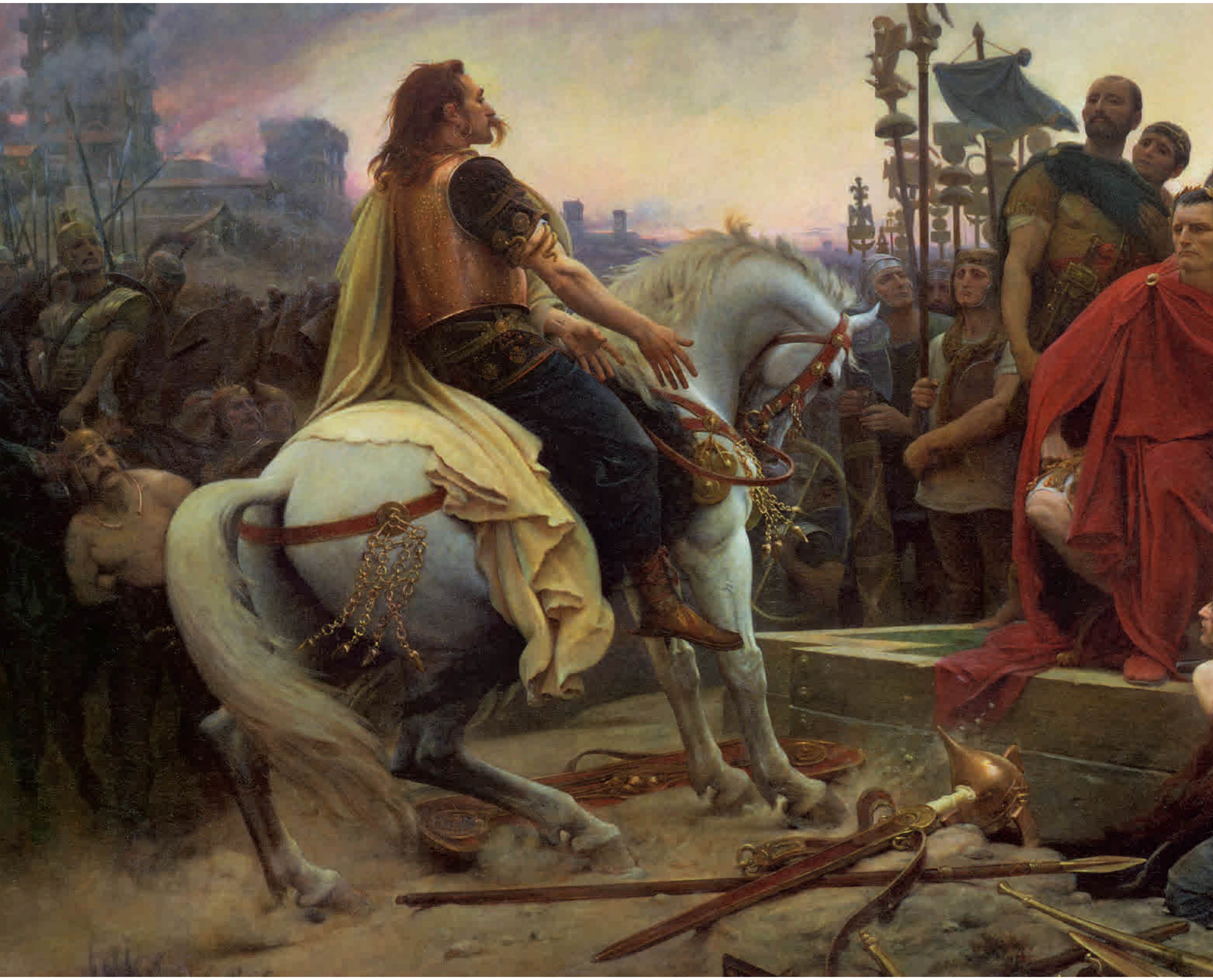
The Romans at length advanced toward the city in order to besiege it. The Carthaginians met the assaults of the Romans with the utmost vigour. They made frequent and bold sallies on the besiegers, endeavouring to burn their engines and to harass their foragers. The Roman tribune Scipio, afterward surnamed Africanus, distinguished himself above all the rest of the Roman officers. His great ability won him such a lofty reputation that many officers his equal in rank, were at first jealous of his achievements; but his modesty and reserve at length changed their envy into esteem and respect, so that when deputies were sent from Rome to inquire into the state of the siege, the whole army unanimously commended him. Having ordered his troops to provide themselves with axes, levers, and scaling-ladders, he led them, in the dead of the night, to the district of the city called Megara. The Carthaginians, surprised at this sudden attack, at first made but feeble resistance, but soon recovering from their terror, they defended themselves so vigorously, that the Romans were unable to scale the walls. Scipio, at this juncture, perceived a tower that had been abandoned, and which stood without the city, very near the walls. He immediately detached thither a party of bold and daring soldiers. They then hastened to the gates and broke them down. Scipio and his troops instantly entered, and drove the Carthaginians from that quarter of the city. The conflict was long and obstinate. The Romans fought with the valour of conquerors, while the Carthaginians, fighting for home and country, were inspired with the desperate courage of despair.

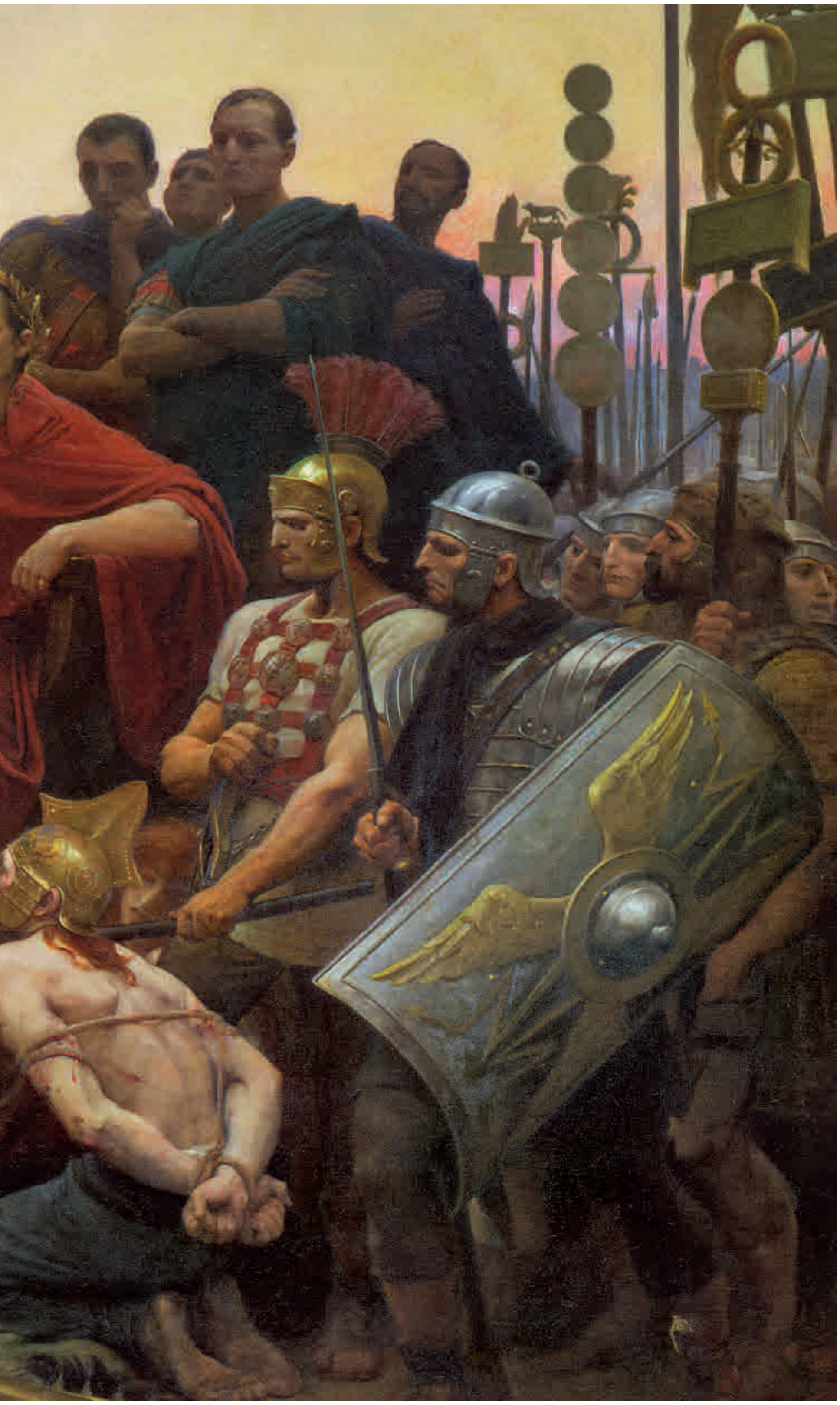
During the winter, Scipio endeavored to overpower the enemy's troops without the city. He accordingly attacked a neighbouring fort called Nepheris. After sustaining a siege for twenty-four days the fort was carried, with great bloodshed on both sides, and contributed greatly to the taking old Carthage itself, as after that time it was almost impossible to convey provisions into the city.

Early in the spring, Scipio attacked, at one and the same time, the harbour called Cothon and the citadel. The Romans, after gaining the walls which surrounded this port, threw themselves into the great square of the city that was over it. For six days the combat was carried on in every part of the houses, from top to bottom. The slaughter which occurred during those six days was most terrible. At length, the Carthaginians, appalled by the sight of this bloodshed, determined to surrender. Carthage had fallen. The Roman soldiers eager for plunder, and heated with victory, pillaged the city, and laid it in ruins. When the news of the fall of Carthage reached Rome, the whole city rejoiced. Rome now stood without a rival.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Roman Turtle Formation, detail of a casting of Trajan's Column.
Plaster cast, 152.1 cm (height of drum segments), 369.5 cm (diameter).
The National Museum of Romanian History, Bucharest.
Photographer: Cristian Chirita.





Battle of Alesia

(September, 52 BCE)

To ensure that your whole host may withstand the brunt of the enemy's attack and remain unshaken – this is effected by manoeuvers direct and indirect. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 5, 3)

Labienus, when neither the ramparts or ditches could check the onset of the enemy, informs Caesar by messengers of what he intended to do. Caesar hastens to share in the action.

His arrival being known from the colour of his robe, and the troops of cavalry, and the cohorts which he had ordered to follow him being seen, as these low and sloping grounds were plainly visible from the eminences, the enemy join battle. A shout being raised by both sides, it was succeeded by a general shout along the ramparts and whole line of fortifications. Our troops, laying aside their javelins, carry on the engagement with their swords. The cavalry is suddenly seen in the rear of the Gauls; the other cohorts advance rapidly; the enemy turn their backs; the cavalry intercept them in their flight, and a great slaughter ensues. Sedulius, the general and chief of the Lemovices is slain; Vergasillaunus [Vercassivellaunos: relative of Vercingetorix], the Arvernian, is taken alive in the flight, seventy-four military standards are brought to Caesar, and few out of so great a number return safe to their camp. The besieged, beholding from the town the slaughter and flight of their countrymen, despairing of safety, lead back their troops from the fortifications. A flight of the Gauls from their camp immediately ensues on hearing of this disaster, and had not the soldiers been wearied by sending frequent reinforcements, and the labour of the entire day, all the enemy's forces could have been destroyed.

(adapted from: *Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic and Civil Wars*,
translated by W.A. McDevitte and W.S. Bohn)

Lionel Noël Royer, *Vercingetorix Throws Down his Arms at the Feet of Julius Caesar*, 1899.
Oil on canvas, 321 x 482 cm.
Musée Crozatier, Le Puy-en-Velay.

Battle of Teutoburg Forest

(September, 9 CE)

Country in which there are precipitous cliffs with torrents running between, deep natural hollows, confined places, tangled thickets, quagmires and crevasses, should be left with all possible speed and not approached. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 9, 15)

Dark and disheartening, even to heroic spirits, must have seemed the prospects of Germany when Arminius planned the general rising of his countrymen against Rome. Half the land was occupied by Roman garrisons; and, what was worse, many of the Germans seemed patiently acquiescent in their state of bondage. The resources of Rome seemed boundless; the earth seemed left void of independent nations. The German chieftain knew well the gigantic power of the oppressor. Arminius was no rude savage, fighting out of mere animal instinct, or in ignorance of the might of his adversary. He was familiar with the Roman language and civilisation; he had served in the Roman armies; he had been admitted to the Roman citizenship, and raised to the rank of the equestrian order. It was part of the subtle policy of Rome to confer rank and privileges on the youth of the leading families in the nations which she wished to enslave.

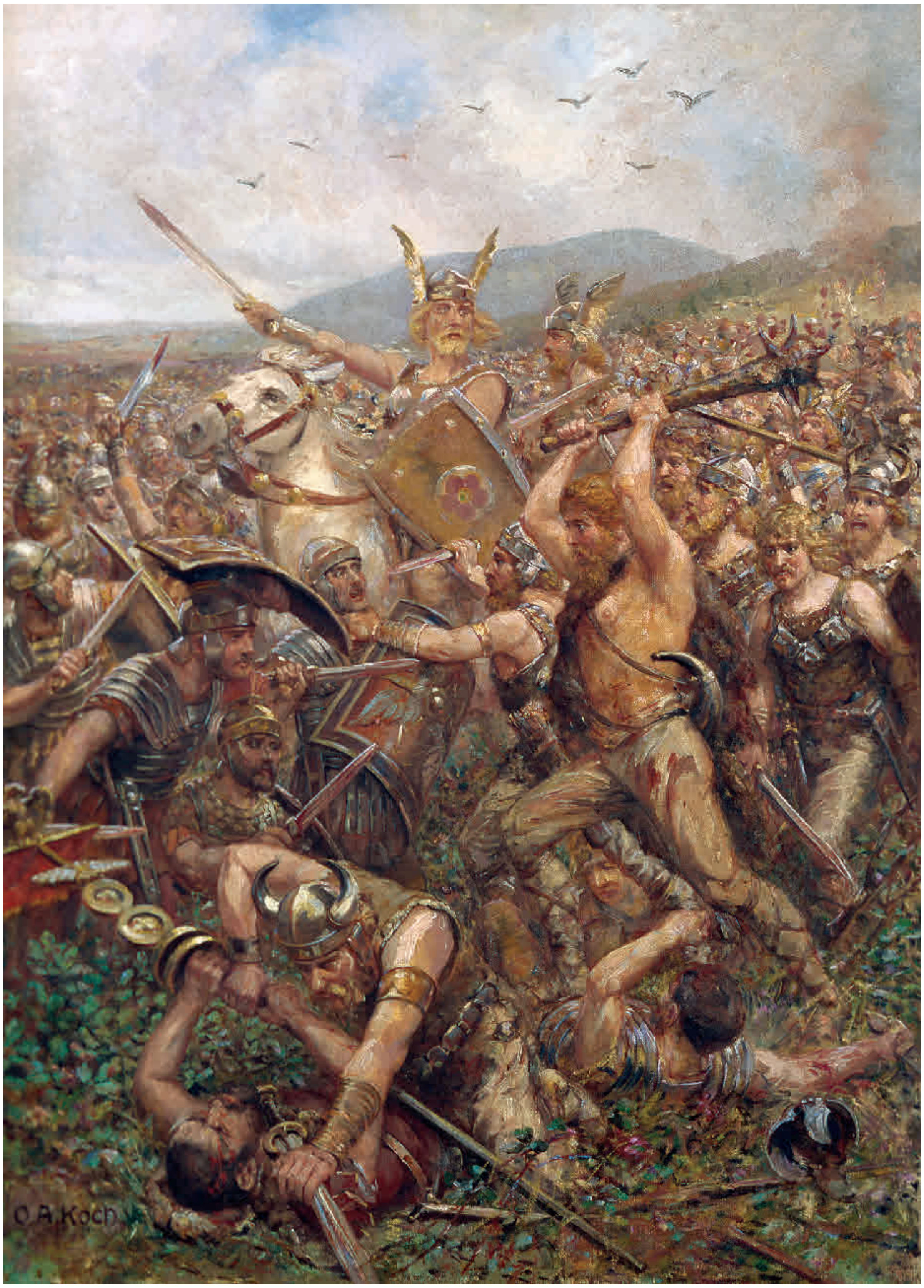
It was true that Rome was no longer the great military republic which for so many ages had shattered the kingdoms of the world. Her system of government was changed; and after a century of revolution and civil war, she had placed herself under the despotism of a single ruler. But the discipline of her troops was yet unimpaired, and her warlike spirit seemed unabated.

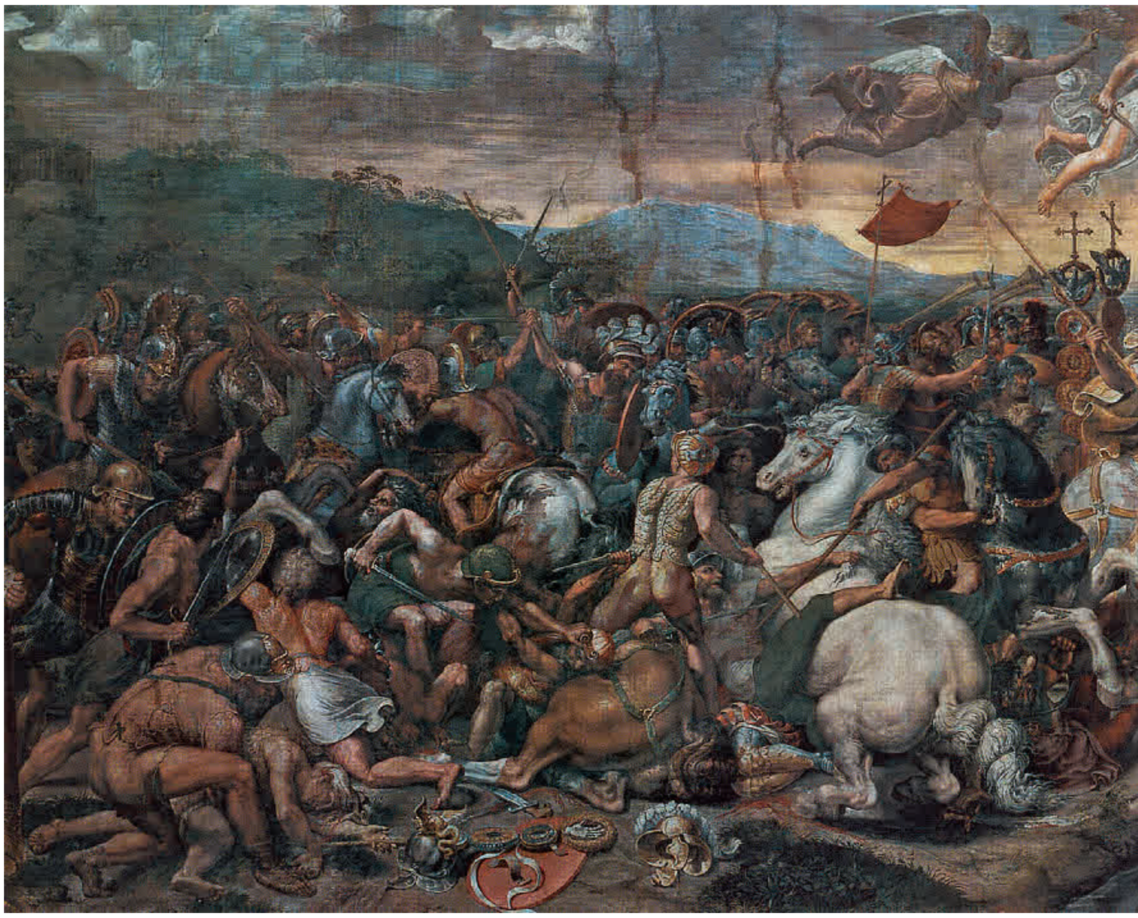
Arminius found among the other German chiefs many who sympathised with him in his indignation, but to declare open war against Rome, and to encounter Varus' army in a pitched battle, would have been merely rushing upon certain destruction. Stratagem was, therefore, indispensable; and it was necessary to blind Varus to their schemes until a favourable opportunity should arrive for striking a decisive blow. A succession of heavy rains rendered the country more difficult for the operations of regular troops, and Arminius, seeing that the infatuation of Varus was complete, secretly directed the tribes near the Weser and the Ems to take up arms in open revolt against the Romans. This was represented to Varus as an occasion which required his prompt attendance at the spot; he therefore set his army in motion, and marched eastward in a line parallel to the course of the Lippe, here it was that Arminius had fixed the scene of his enterprise. For some distance Varus was allowed to move on, only harassed by slight skirmishes, but struggling with difficulty through the broken ground. Arminius now gave the signal for a general attack. The fierce shouts of the Germans pealed through the gloom of the forests, and in thronging multitudes. At last, in a series of desperate attacks, the column was pierced through and through, two of the eagles captured, and the Roman host either fell fighting beneath the overpowering numbers of the enemy, or perished in the swamps and woods in unavailing efforts at flight.

Never was victory more decisive, never was the liberation of an oppressed people more instantaneous and complete. We learn this from his biographer Suetonius; and, indeed, every ancient writer who alludes to the overthrow of Varus attests the importance of the blow against the Roman power, and the bitterness with which it was felt.

(adapted from: *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World: from Marathon to Waterloo* by E.S. Creasy)

O. A. Koch, *Varusschlacht* (Battle of the Teutoburg Forest), 1909.
Oil on canvas.
Lippisches Landesmuseum, Detmold.
© Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold


O.A. Koch

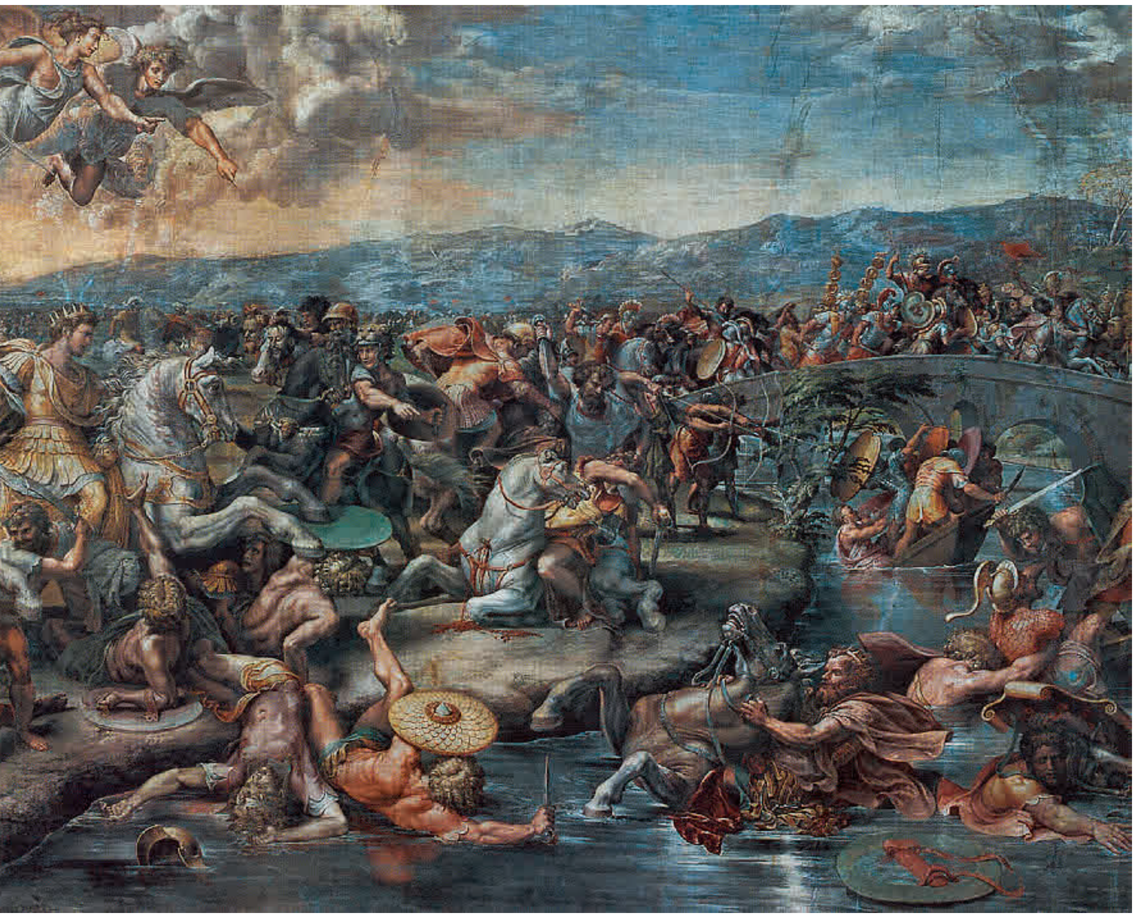


Battle of Milvian Bridge

(28 October, 312 CE)

Military tactics are like unto water; for water in its natural course runs away from high places and hastens downwards. So in war, the way is to avoid what is strong and to strike at what is weak. Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing. Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 6, 29-32)

The celerity of Constantine's march has been compared to the rapid conquest of Italy by the first of the Cesars; nor is the flattering parallel repugnant to the truth of history, since no more than fifty-eight days elapsed between the surrender of Verona and the final decision of the war. Constantine had always apprehended that the tyrant would consult the dictates of fear, and perhaps of prudence; and that, instead of risking his last hopes in general engagement, he would shut himself up within the walls of Rome. His ample magazines secured him against the danger of famine; and as the situation of Constantine admitted not of delay, he might have been reduced to the sad necessity of destroying with fire and sword the imperial city, the noblest reward of his victory, and the deliverance of which had been the motive, or rather indeed the pretence, of the civil war. It was with equal surprise and pleasure, that on his arrival at a place called Saxa Rubra, about nine miles from Rome he discovered the army of Maxentius prepared to give him battle. Their long front filled a very spacious plain, and their deep array reached to the banks of the Tiber, which covered their rear, and forbade their retreat. We are informed,

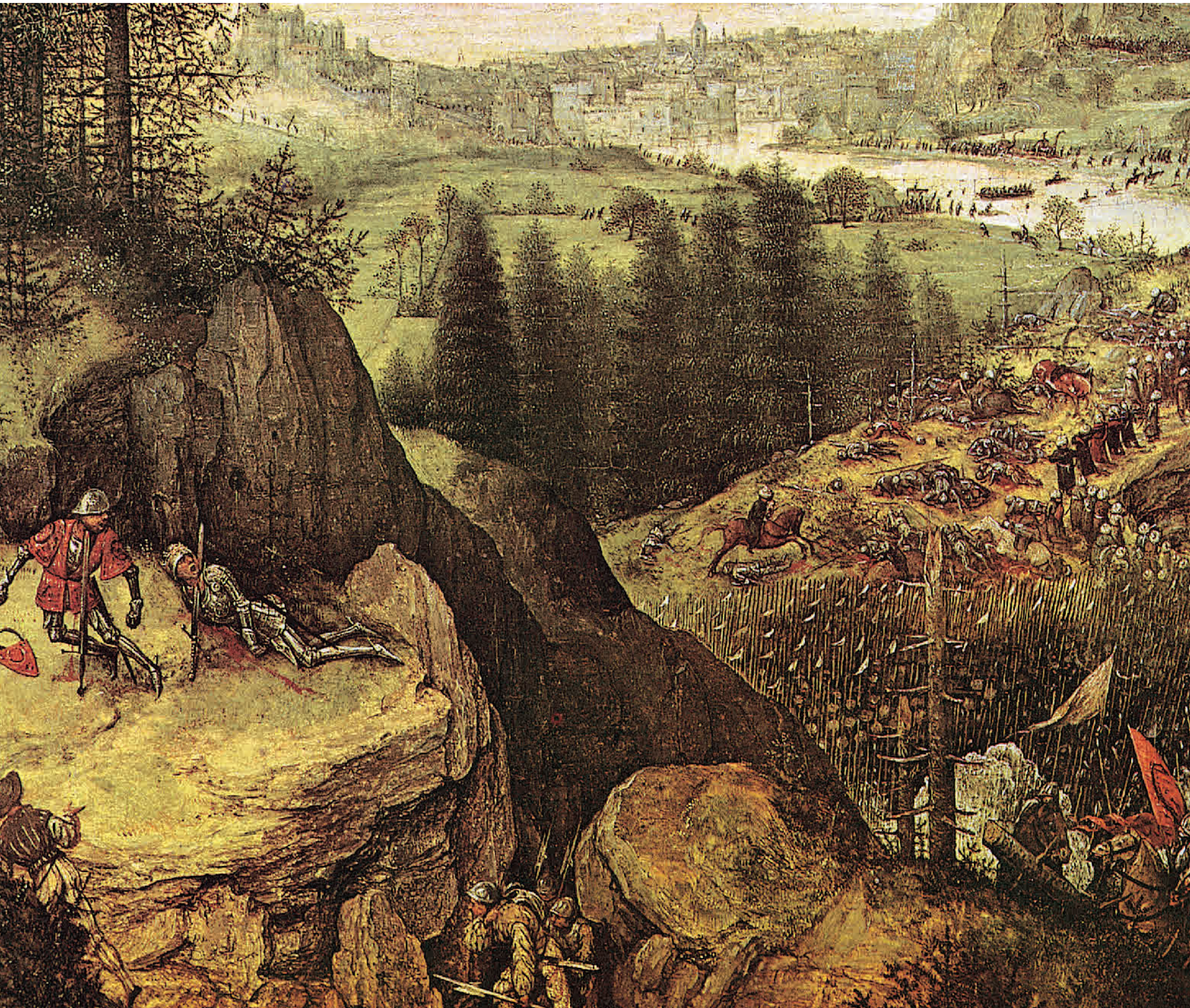


and we may believe, that Constantine disposed his troops with consummate skills, and that he chose for himself the post of honour and danger. Distinguished by the splendour of his arms, he charged in person the cavalry of his rival; and his irresistible attack determined the fortune of the day.

The cavalry of Maxentius was principally composed either of unwieldy cuirassiers, or of light Moors and Numidians. They yielded to the vigour of the other. The defeat of the two wings left the infantry without any protection on its flanks, and the undisciplined Italians fled without reluctance from the standard of a tyrant whom they always had hated, and whom they no longer feared. The praetorians, conscious that their offences were beyond the reach of mercy, were animated by revenge and despair. Notwithstanding their repeated efforts, those brave veterans were unable to recover the victory; they obtained however, an honourable death; and it was observed, that their bodies covered the same ground which had been occupied by their ranks. The confusion then became general, and the dismayed troops of Maxentius, pursued by an implacable enemy, rushed by the thousands into the deep and rapid stream of the Tiber. The emperor himself attempted to escape back into the city over the Milvian Bridge, but the crowds which pressed through that narrow passage, forced him into the river, where he was immediately drowned by the weight of his armour. His body, which had sunk very deep into the mud, was found with some difficulty the next day.

(adapted from: *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by E. Gibbon)

Giulio Romano, *The Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, 1520-1524.
Fresco.
Hall of Constantine, Apostolic Palace, Vatican City.



Dark and Middle Ages

Battle of Tolbiac

(496 CE)

Prohibit the taking of omens, and do away with superstitious doubts. Then, until death itself comes, no calamity need be feared. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 29)

At the age of one-and-twenty, Clovis found himself at the head of the Salian Franks, whose central position was at Tournesis, or Tournay. Rome yet retained within her feeble hold a district independent of the barbarians, of which the governor was Syagrius, and the chief city Soissons. Two such neighbours could not long retain their relative position. On the one side was a community in the last stage of decadence, without patriotic spirit, moral strength, or martial skill; on the other, a young society, trained to war and rapine as the main object of its being, and uniting to the energy of youth contempt for its foe and the confidence inspired by victories already won. The result may be imagined. Clovis set forth with the intent to conquer Syagrius, perhaps with the hope of mastering the whole of Gaul. The first objective he instantly achieved at the Battle of Soissons, in 486.

The next step in his progress was his union with Clotilde, the Catholic daughter of Chilperic II, the Arian king of the Burgundians. This union of Clovis with Clotilde did what a union with no other woman in Europe could have done, bringing him within the great and growing influence of the orthodox Latin church. What the position of the Church was, between the Barbarians on the one side, and the Empire on the other, had been complicated by the establishment of the Visigoth and Burgundian kingdoms, whose rulers professed the Arian heresy.

The Catholics, then, as the stay of imperial support was gradually withdrawn beyond the Alps, felt the necessity of some other equally powerful support against the secular auxiliaries whom their Arian rivals had acquired, and who, they well knew, would be used against the interests of the Orthodox Church. At this very crisis, the Frank appeared in the northern horizon, and, by a masterpiece of policy, they secured his aid. Nor, if the invader brought assistance to the Church, was the Church less useful to the invader: she could smooth the way for his advance among the old semi-Roman population, where her authority was respected, by conciliating their affections towards a co-religionist, and by representing the redoubtable leader of those terrible legions as the child and champion of the faith.

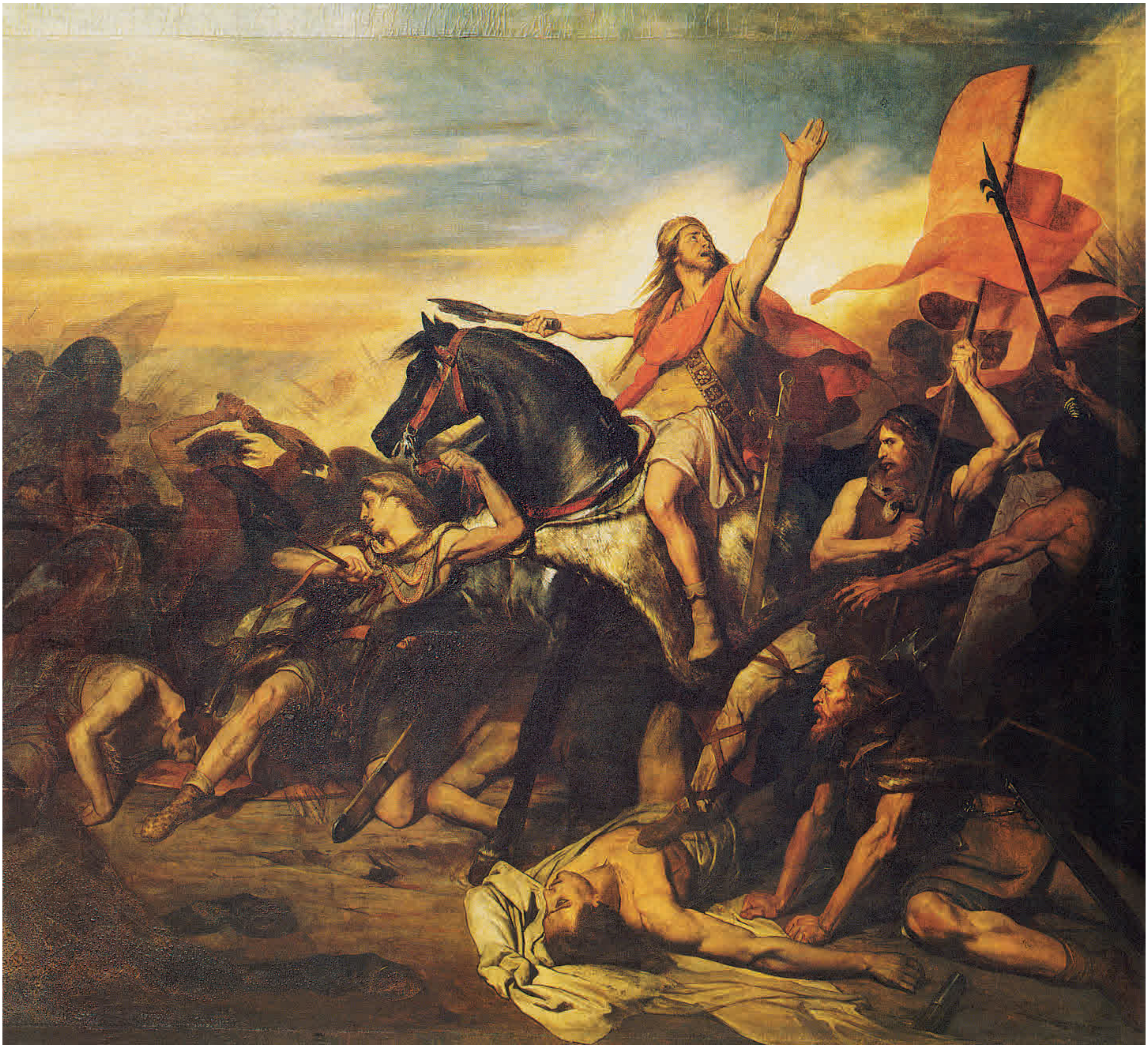
An immense band of barbarians, fresher from their forests, and, therefore, more fierce and dreadful than the Franks themselves, were advancing rapidly upon Gaul. Clovis rushed to the rescue, and met them at Tolbiac. There, in the "current of a heady fight," when he saw his battalions waver beneath the furious charges of the enemy, he cried to the God of Clotilde for help, and vowed to adore Him if he might yet restore the day. He conquered; and he kept his vow.

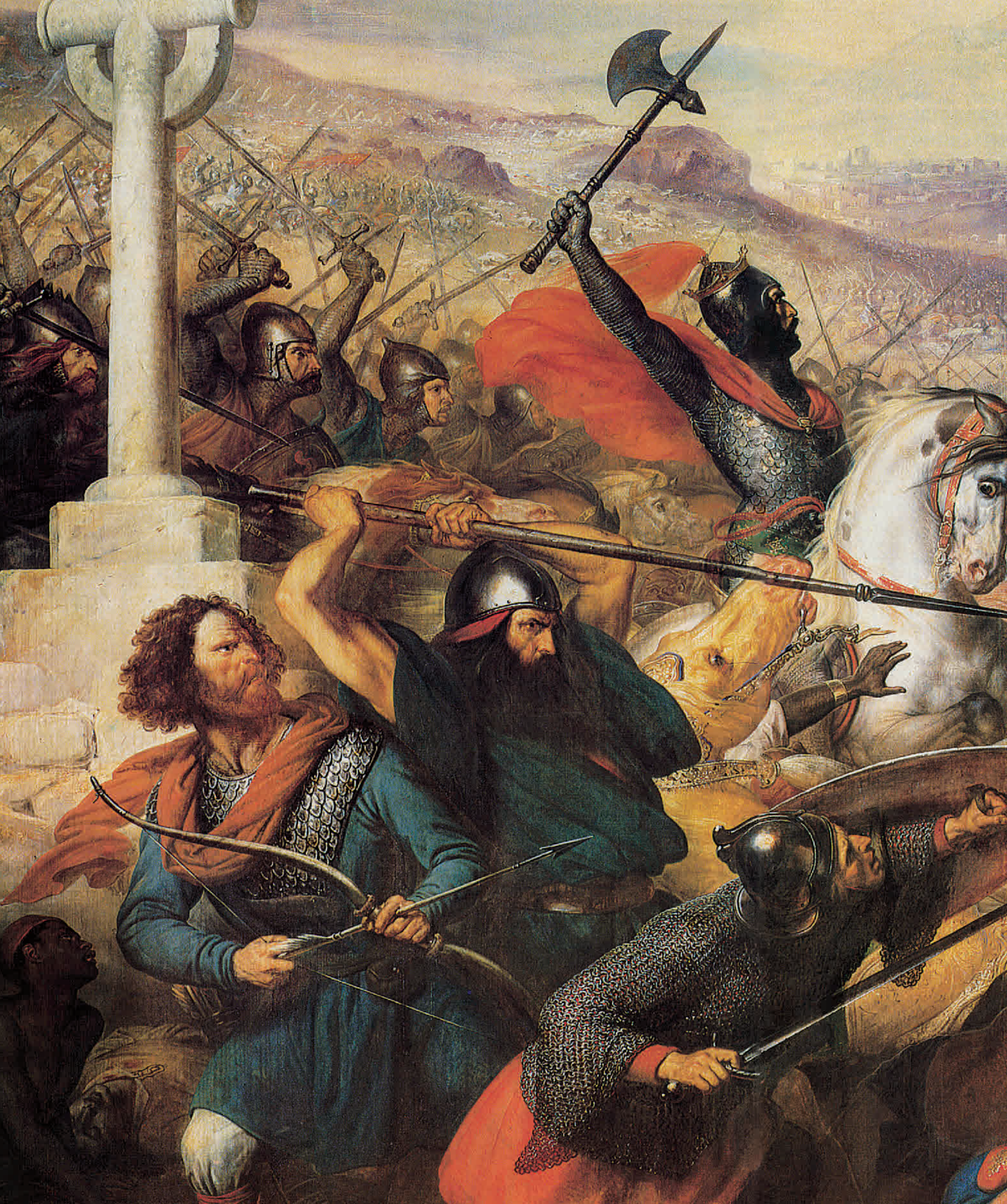
At Rheims, he received the rite of Christian baptism from its bishop, St Remi, amid more than the usual pageantry and splendour of the Catholic ceremonial. Three thousand of his warriors followed their chief's example. Thus, says Michelet, did the Church take solemn possession of the Barbarians. The subsequent career of Clovis was a succession of triumphs.

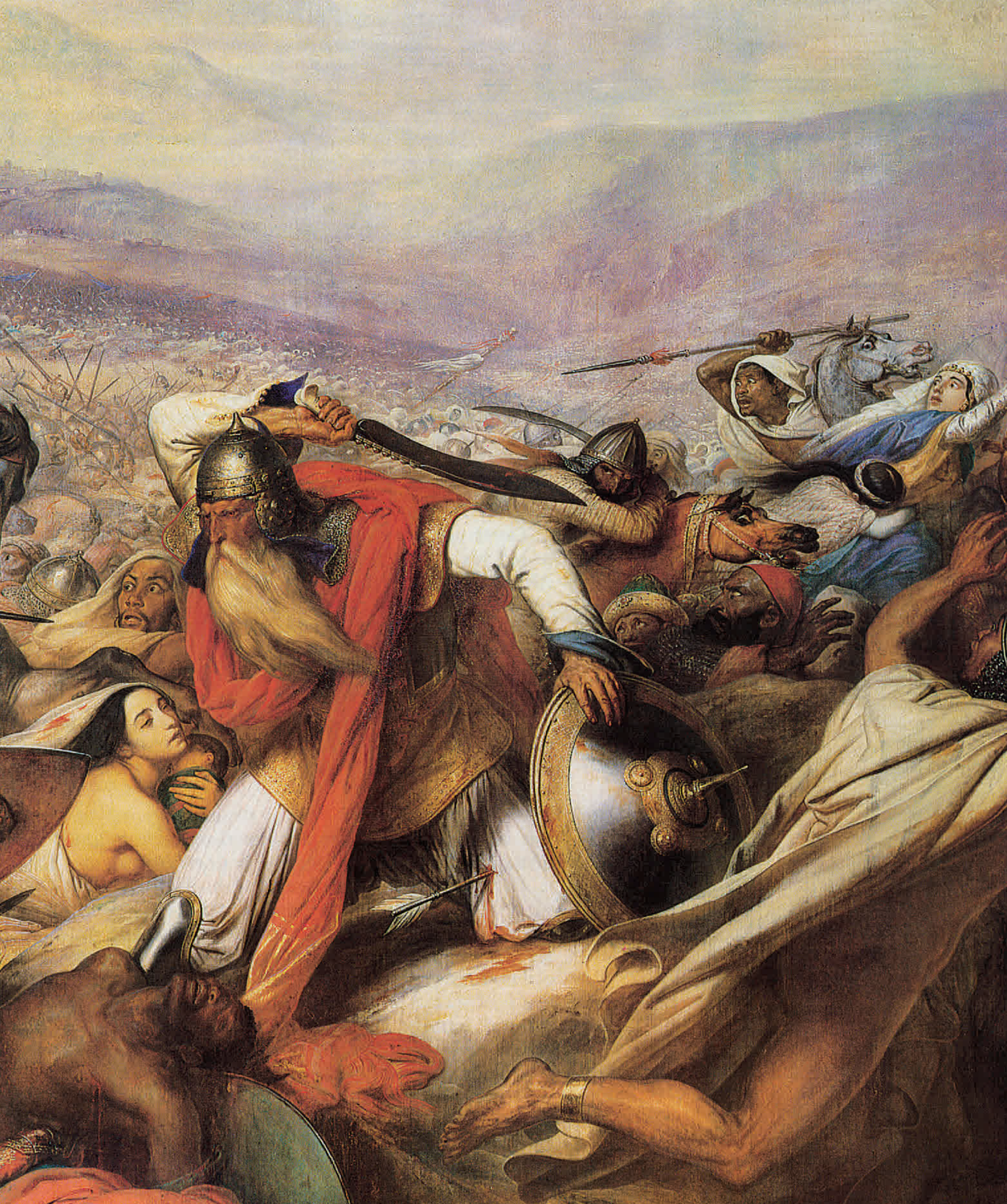
(adapted from: *The Fall of Rome, and the Rise of the New Nationalities* by G. Sheppard)

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Suicide of Saul* (detail), 1562.
Oil on oak, 33.5 x 55 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna. (pp. 54-55)

Ary Scheffer, *Battle of Tolbiac*, 1836.
Oil on canvas, 415 x 465 cm. Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.







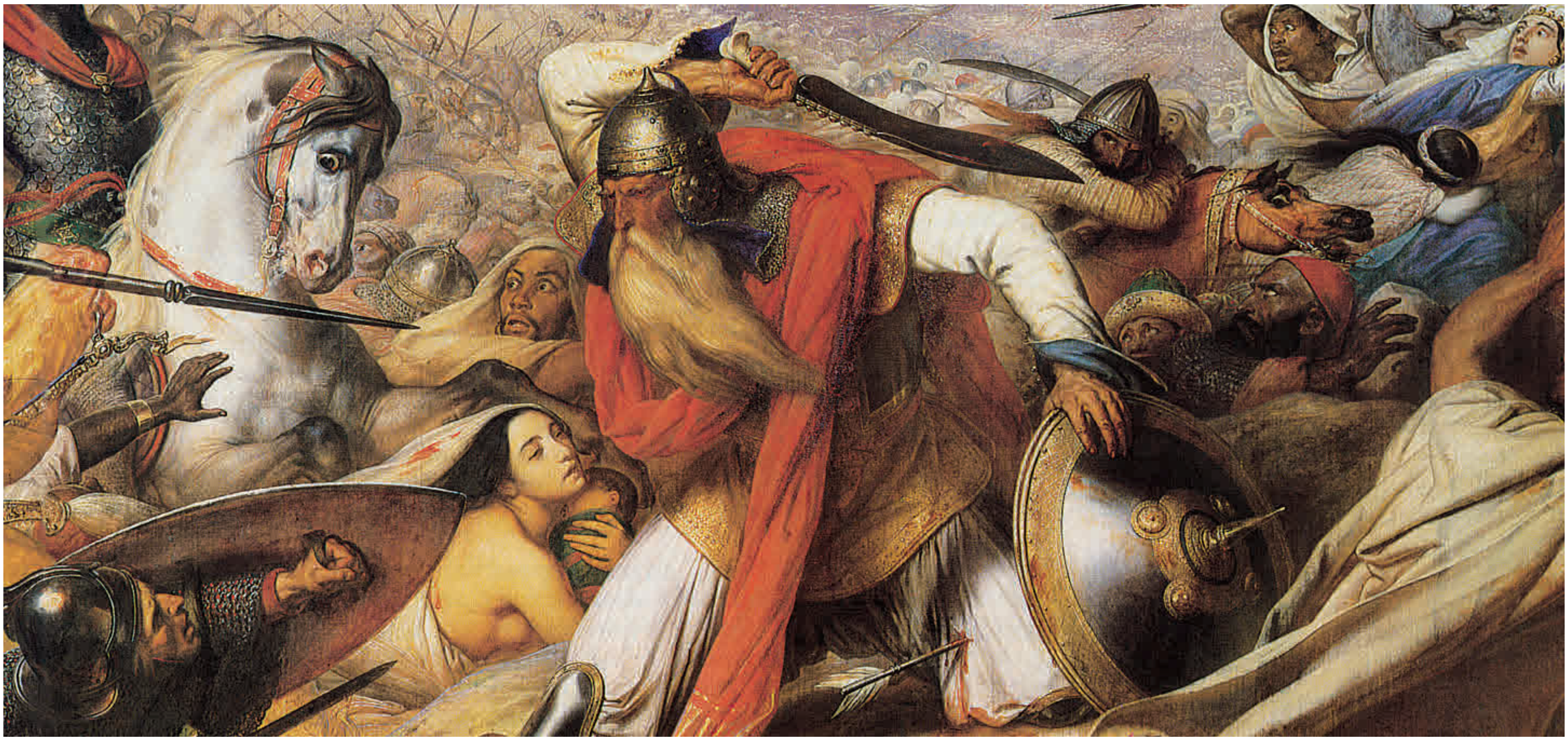
Battle of Tours

(10 October, 732 CE)

In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 2, 19)

Although three centuries had passed since the Germanic conquerors of Rome had crossed the Rhine, never to repass that frontier stream, no settled system of institutions or government, no amalgamation of the various races into our people, no uniformity of language or habits had been established in the country at the time when Charles Martel was called to repel the Saracenic invasion from the south. Exactly a century passed between the death of Mohammed and the date of the Battle of Tours. During that century the followers of the Prophet had torn away half the Roman Empire; and, besides their conquests over Persia, the Saracens had overrun Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain, in an uncheckered and apparently irresistible career of victory. It was under one of their ablest and most renowned commanders, with a veteran army, and with every apparent advantage of time, place, and circumstance, that the Arabs made their great effort at the conquest of Europe north of the Pyrenees.

In addition to his cardinal military virtues, Abderrahman is described by the Arab writers as a model of integrity and justice. The first two years of his second administration in Spain were occupied in severe reforms of the abuses which under his predecessors had crept into the system of government, and in extensive preparations for his intended conquest in Gaul. It was from this formidable host that Gaul and Christendom were

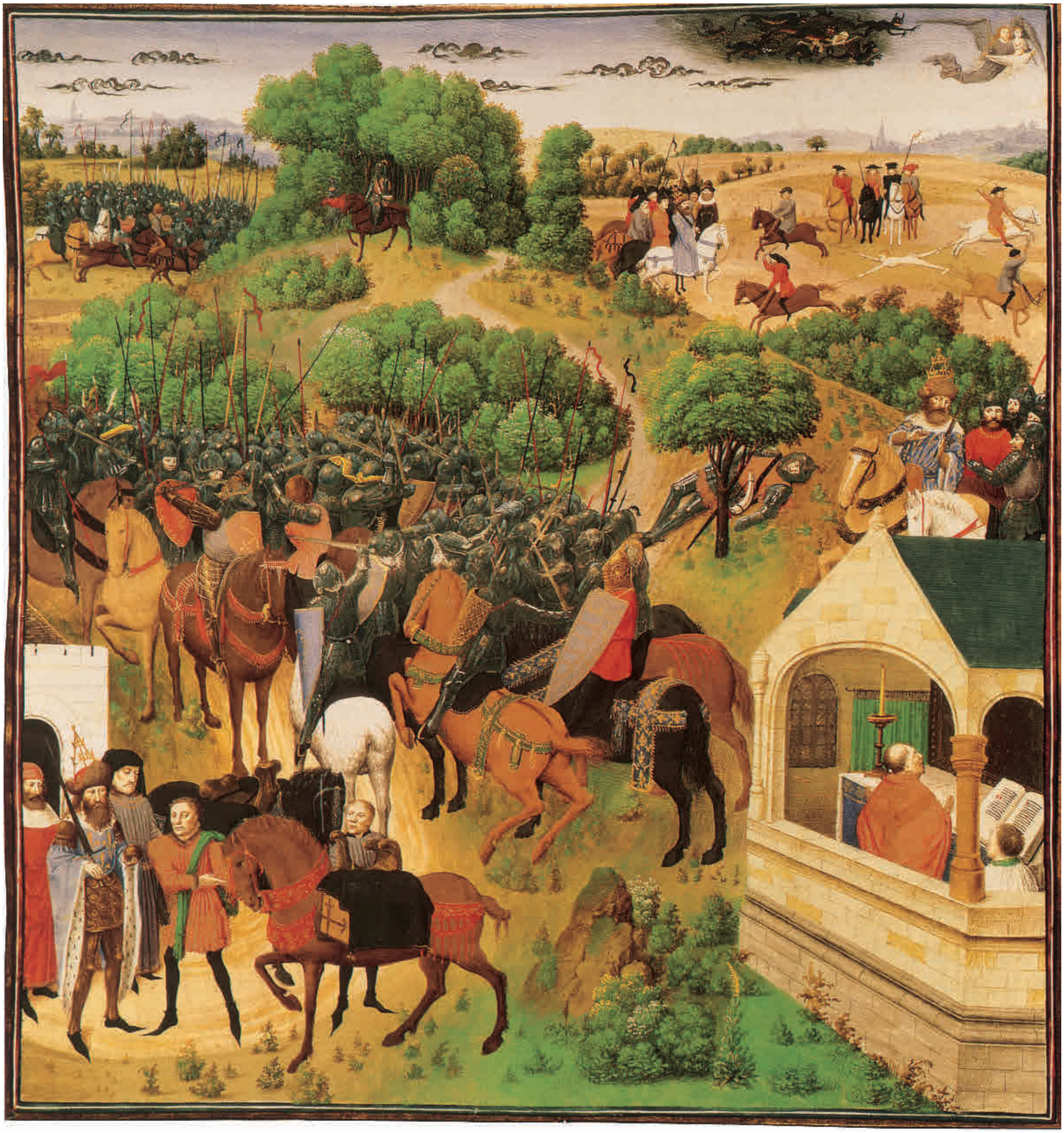


at last rescued by the strong arm of Prince Charles; Charles Martel added experienced skill to his natural courage, and he had also formed a militia of veterans among the Franks. But when we remember that Charles had no standing army, and the independent spirit of the Frank warriors who followed his standard, it seems most probable that it was not in his power to adopt the cautious policy of watching the invaders, and wearing out their strength by delay.

Near the River Owar, the two great hosts of the two languages and the two creeds were set in array against each other. The Muslim horsemen dashed fierce and frequent forward against the battalions of the Franks, who resisted manfully, and many fell dead on either side, until the going down of the sun. Their cavaliers had soon hewn their way into the centre of the Christian host. But many of the Muslims were fearful for the safety of the spoil which they had stored in their tents, and a false cry arose in their ranks that some of the enemy were plundering the camp; whereupon several squadrons of the Muslim horsemen rode off to protect their tents. But it seemed as if they fled; and all the host was troubled. And, while Abderrahman strove to check their tumult, and to lead them back to battle, the warriors of the Franks came around him, and he was pierced through with many spears, so that he died. Then all the host fled before the enemy and many died in the flight.

(adapted from: *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World: from Marathon to Waterloo* by E.S. Creasy)

Carl von Steuben, *Charles Martel in the Battle of Poitiers*, 1834-1837.
Oil on canvas, 542 x 465 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. (pp. 58-59, 60, 61)



Battle of Roncevaux Pass

(15 August, 778 CE)

There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 5, 7)

Composed some time after the *Vita Caroli* of 830 – most likely in the late 11th century for William the Conqueror – *The Song of Roland* comprises the narration of the events leading up to and including the Battle of Roncevaux. The written *Song* includes and embellishes upon what appears to be an already established oral narrative tradition, in which the characters of the *geste* become stronger, more prolific in battle, and nobler with each re-telling. All of this evidence of successive embellishments points to two things regarding the portrayal of the individual in *The Song of Roland*. First, the supernumeration and repetition of the heroic qualities of the principals in the tale point to the assumed familiarity of the reading/listening audience with the *weltanschauung* presented by the author. Second, the addition of mythic figures, especially Charlemagne, into the narrative reveals the structural hieratism of the author's view of the relationship between the individual and society.

In *The Song of Roland*, the "rules" of social behaviour are assumed to be known to all characters in the text, Christian and Saracen alike. The opening verse points to the author's familiarity – and the characters' familiarity – with the conventions of knightly behaviour. The central conflict of the entire story is simple: Christian versus pagan, warrior against warrior, *type against anti-type*. In the opening verse, the author describes the actions taken by Charlemagne – his military victories – and the public, known attributes of Marsilion – the worship of his false gods. It is also interesting to note that in this encapsulation of the central conflict, there is no mention of Roland, about whom the entire poem is eponymously composed. There is no need to explain the internal motivation of any character, because the social structure rigidly dictates the rewards and penalties for almost every act. We can see this social determinism at work most strongly in two scenes: Count Ganelon's betrayal of Roland to Marsilion, and the description of the battle between Roland's forces and the first wave of Paynim attackers.

Instead of the individual acts of war, in which one would assume each encounter to be unique, Roland's battles acquire a certain sameness: each Muslim is split in half, along with his horse. Again, the repeated element takes on the tone of ritual; this is how war is to be waged, and neither side plays by any other rules. By repeating the stylised depiction of Roland in battle, the author casts Roland as a type; the sublimation of "rules" – whether in political dealings or on the battlefield – is inherent, with no need to explain individual motivation, because of the commonly-known nature of the conventions of public accountability. All of these things are described as naturally following one on the other, "straightaway". Charlemagne's experience of proper and courteous behaviour is so extensive that he no longer need think for himself in such matters; he does the "right" thing at once. A final note about Charlemagne may help to establish the tone of the author toward the expression of internal, personal individuality: Charlemagne does not make his own decisions in matters of state, though he may be the sole proclaimer of law. Charlemagne relies on the advice of his barons and lords for the construction of policy. It is precisely this convention of public pride and shame that Chrétien de Troyes begins to subvert in *Perceval*.

(adapted from: "The Rise of the Internal Consciousness between 1100 and 1500" by T.J. Tobin; *Legends of Charlemagne* by T. Bullfinch)

Eight stages of *The Song of Roland* in one picture, 15th century.
From Philip the Good's copy of the *Grandes Chroniques de France*. Illumination.
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.

Siege of Paris

(November, 885 – October, 886 CE)

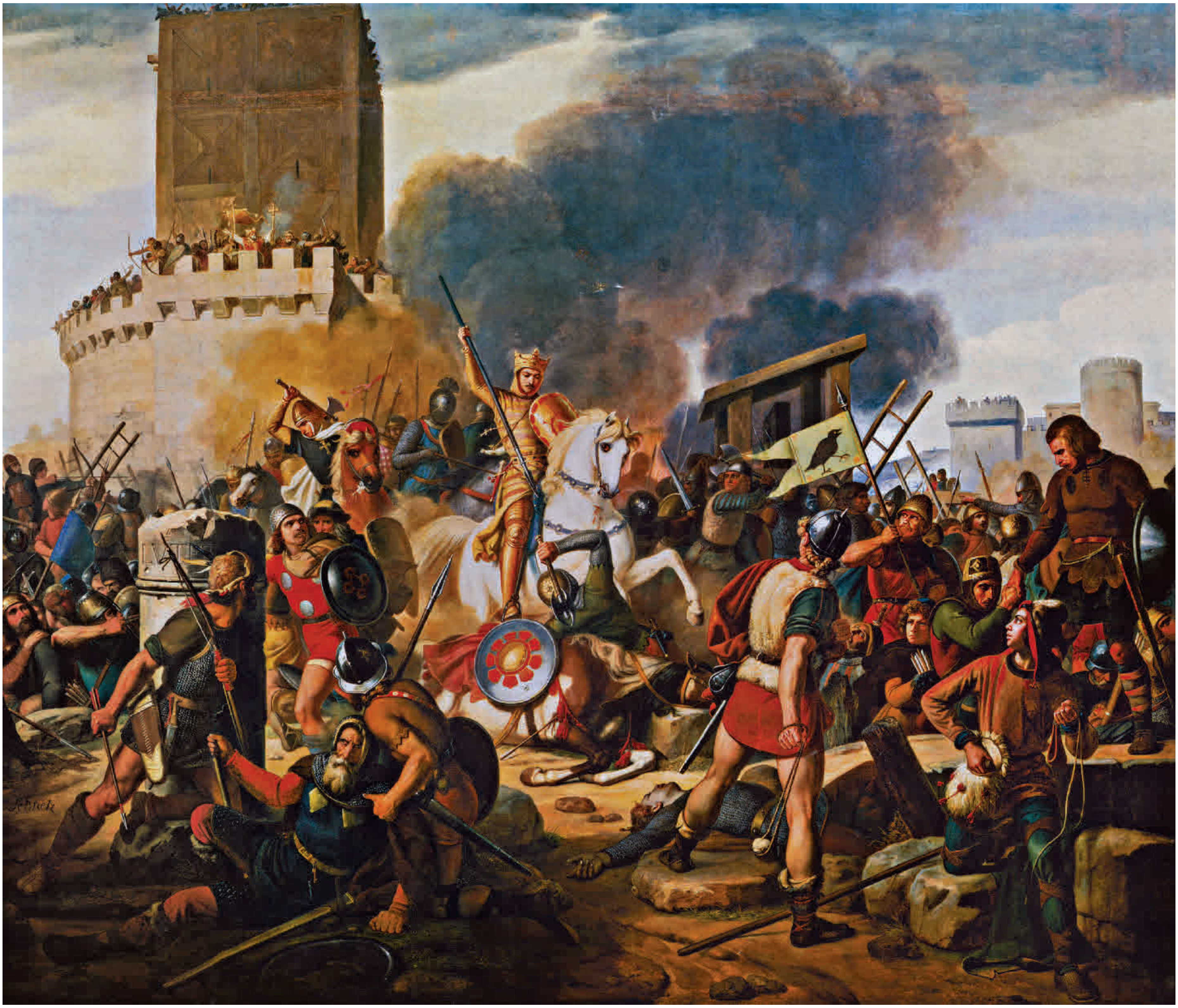
The rule is, not to besiege walled cities if it can possibly be avoided. The preparation of mantlets, movable shelters, and various implements of war, will take up three whole months; and the piling up of mounds over against the walls will take three months more. The general, unable to control his irritation, will launch his men to the assault like swarming ants, with the result that one-third of his men are slain, while the town still remains untaken. Such are the disastrous effects of a siege. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 3, 4-5)

From the middle of the 9th century Lutetia, or Paris, became a famous city. Rome brought thither its intelligence and its errors, its wisdom and its vices, its wealth and its luxury, its laws and its abuses. Paris was the centre of the Roman dominions in that part of the empire; the Roman governors resided there. Emperors even preferred Lutetia to the most brilliant cities; when Clovis had laid the foundation of the French monarchy, Paris became the capital of his states. Under the reign of this prince and his successors, its extent was so enlarged as to comprise all the space contained between the two arms of the Seine. The irruptions of the Barbarians rendered the fortification of it necessary. No entrance could be had to it but by two bridges: each of these was defended by a strong tower, situated nearly where the great and little Chatelet have since been built. In 885 the importance of these precautions was recognised; a swarm of Normans, eager for booty and thirsting for blood, besieged Paris, which they had often before uselessly attacked. They gave six assaults. The Parisians received them with the greatest courage, were animated by the example of the Count Eudes, whose great qualities afterward raised him to the throne of the Franks, and by the exhortations of Bishop Gauzlin. This prelate, with helm on head, a quiver at his back, and an axe in his girdle, fought in the breach, within sight of a cross he had planted upon the rampart. He met with death while immolating a host of enemies. Anscheric, who succeeded him inherited his courage and his love of his country. He continued to lead the besieged, ably seconded by Ebole, the nephew of Gauzlin. This intrepid abbot spread astonishment and terror wherever he directed his arms. In the second assault he rushed to the breach, armed with a javelin which looked like a great spit, with which he pierced the Normans, crying out to his compatriots, "Take these to the kitchen, they are all ready spitted."

At length, after eighteen months without success, the Barbarians made a last attempt; they came in crowds to the foot of the walls; they were not expected, and many had already gained the parapets, and were crying victory. At that moment a soldier of moderate height, but of extraordinary valour, named Gerbaut, followed only by five men as brave as himself, killed the first, hurled the others into the ditch, snatched up the ladders, and saved the city. Charles le Gros treated with the Normans, and induced them to retire, upon promising to pay them 700 pounds' weight of silver in the course of a few months. This cowardly composition, made by a king at the head of an army, excited the general disgust of the Franks. He was deposed at the diet of Tibur, in 888, and died the same year in indigence, deserted by everybody.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Jean-Victor Schnetz, *Count Odo defends Paris against the Normans*, 1834-1836.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 542 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.



Battle of Hastings

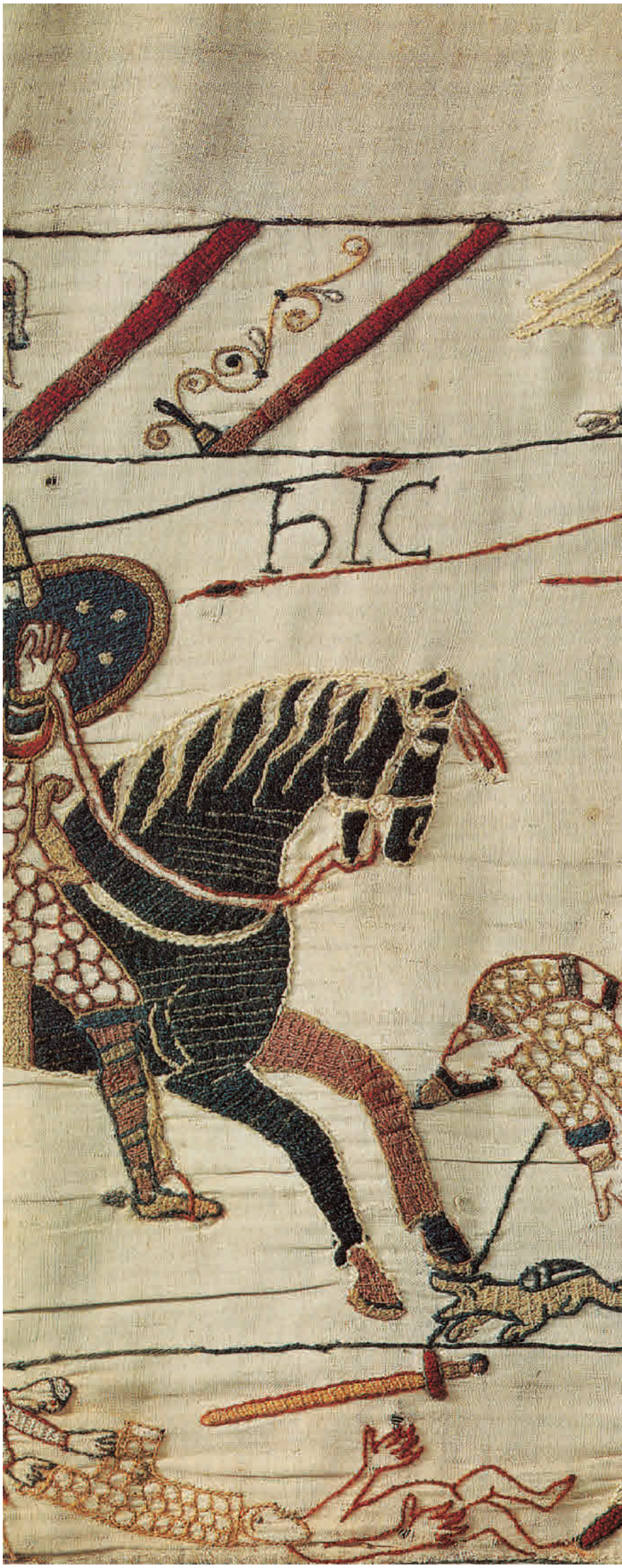
(14 October, 1066)

Do not pursue an enemy who simulates flight; do not attack soldiers whose temper is keen. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 34)

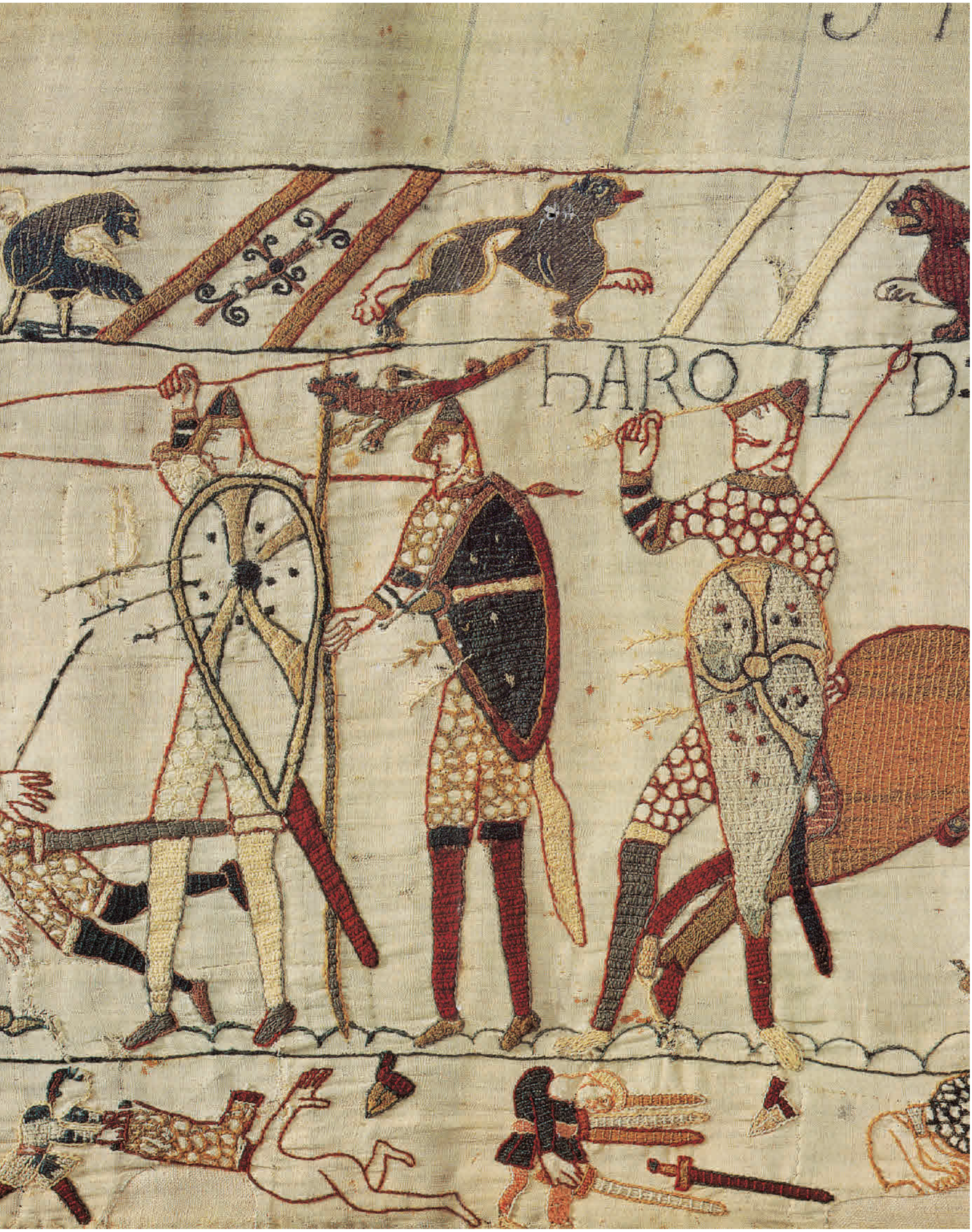
Some eight miles back of Hastings, where the ruins of Battle Abbey now stand, was a little place then called Senlac. Here behind these entrenchments, the English army, hurriedly summoned from all over the kingdom south of the Humber, gathered in loyalty to their new sovereign and to their native land. On the other side, the knights and nobles of the Normans were superbly mounted, their horses and themselves to a certain extent covered with an armour impenetrable to lance or arrow. Such were the forces of England and France facing one another on the southern shores of Sussex early in October, 1066. At daybreak on Saturday 14 October, both camps were speedily awake and active; but, beyond doubt, the Normans were fresher and in better condition for the fight than their Saxon antagonists. William's superiority was in cavalry, and, knowing this, Harold's plan of entrenching his position and fighting on the defensive was capital. But the Norman lines never halt. Pressing vigorously forward they reach and spring upon the palisading, and there the ranks of France and England clashed together.

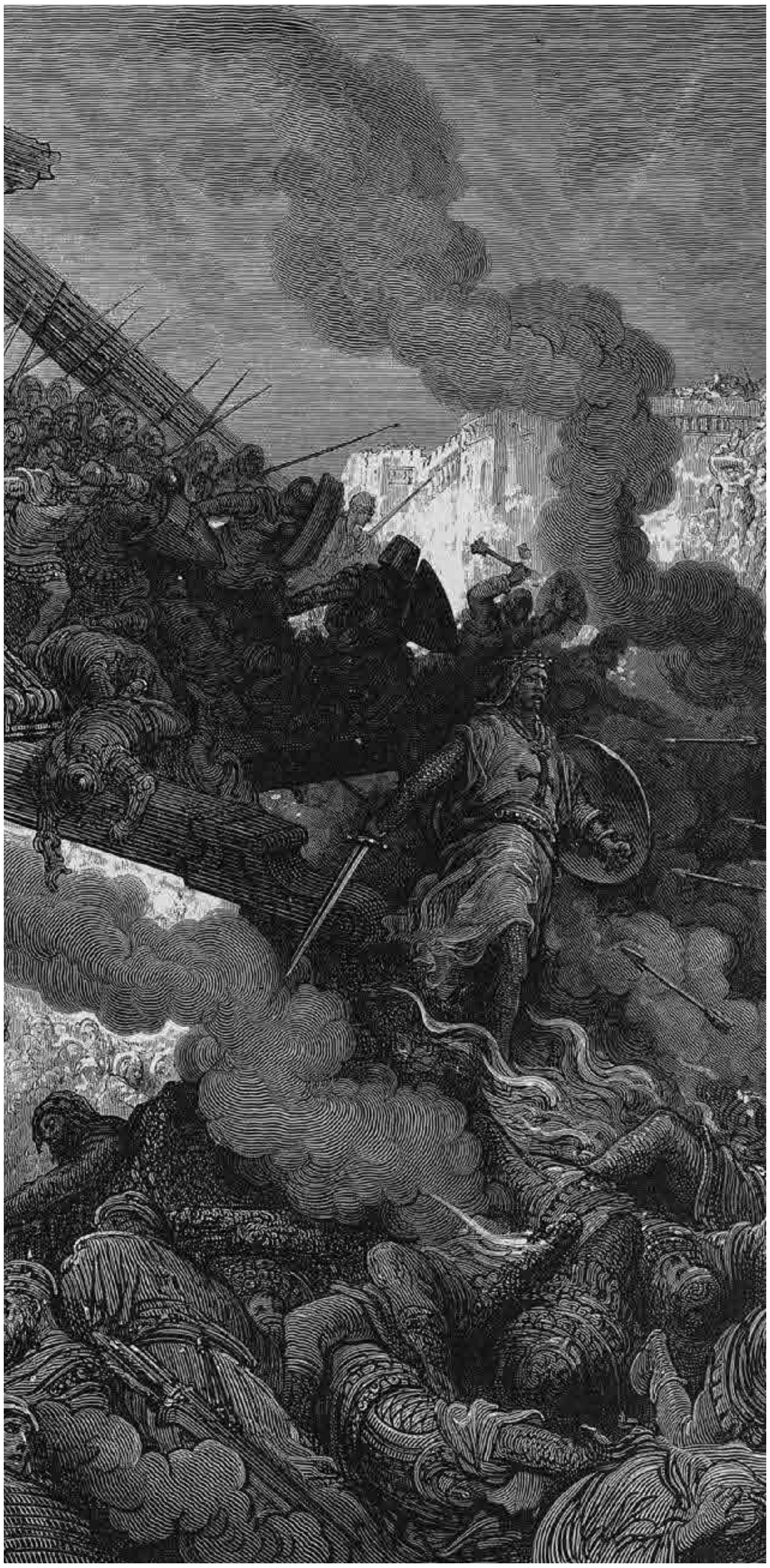
Incredulous at first, they soon realise that the entire Norman force is surely falling back. Then, forgetful of all order or discipline, over the works they go, and bound down the slopes in scattering chase. The solid ranks are broken. The one thing against which Harold warned them, has befallen them. The Norman knights and archers once more face the disordered foe; then, with simultaneous impulse, bear down upon them in headlong impulse. This time there is no withstanding them. William of Normandy, now become William the Conqueror, resumed, on the morrow, his triumphant march to London, and there, on Christmas day, was duly crowned King of England.

(adapted from: *Famous and decisive battles of the world* by C. King)

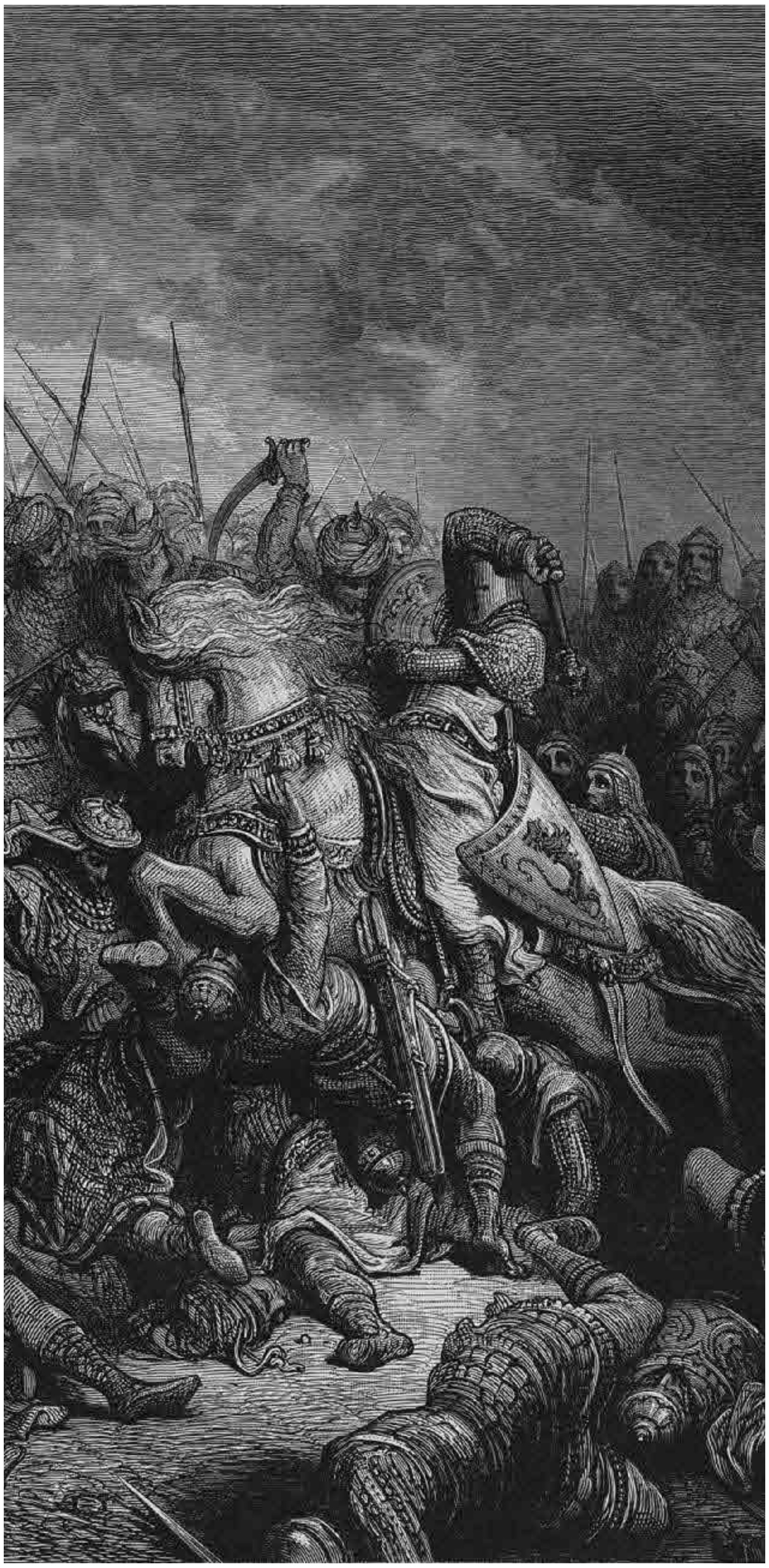


The Bayeux Tapestry (detail), disputedly depicting the death of Harold Godwinson at the Battle of Hastings, c. 1082. Embroidered cloth, 52 x 6838 cm (full length). Musée de la Tapisserie de Bayeux, Bayeux.


HAROLD



Gustave Doré, *Godfrey Enters Jerusalem*,
illustration from Joseph-François Michaud's *History of the Crusades*, 1877.
Woodcut.



Gustave Doré, *Richard the Lion-Heart and Saladin at the Battle of Arsuf*, illustration from Joseph-François Michaud's *History of the Crusades*, 1877.
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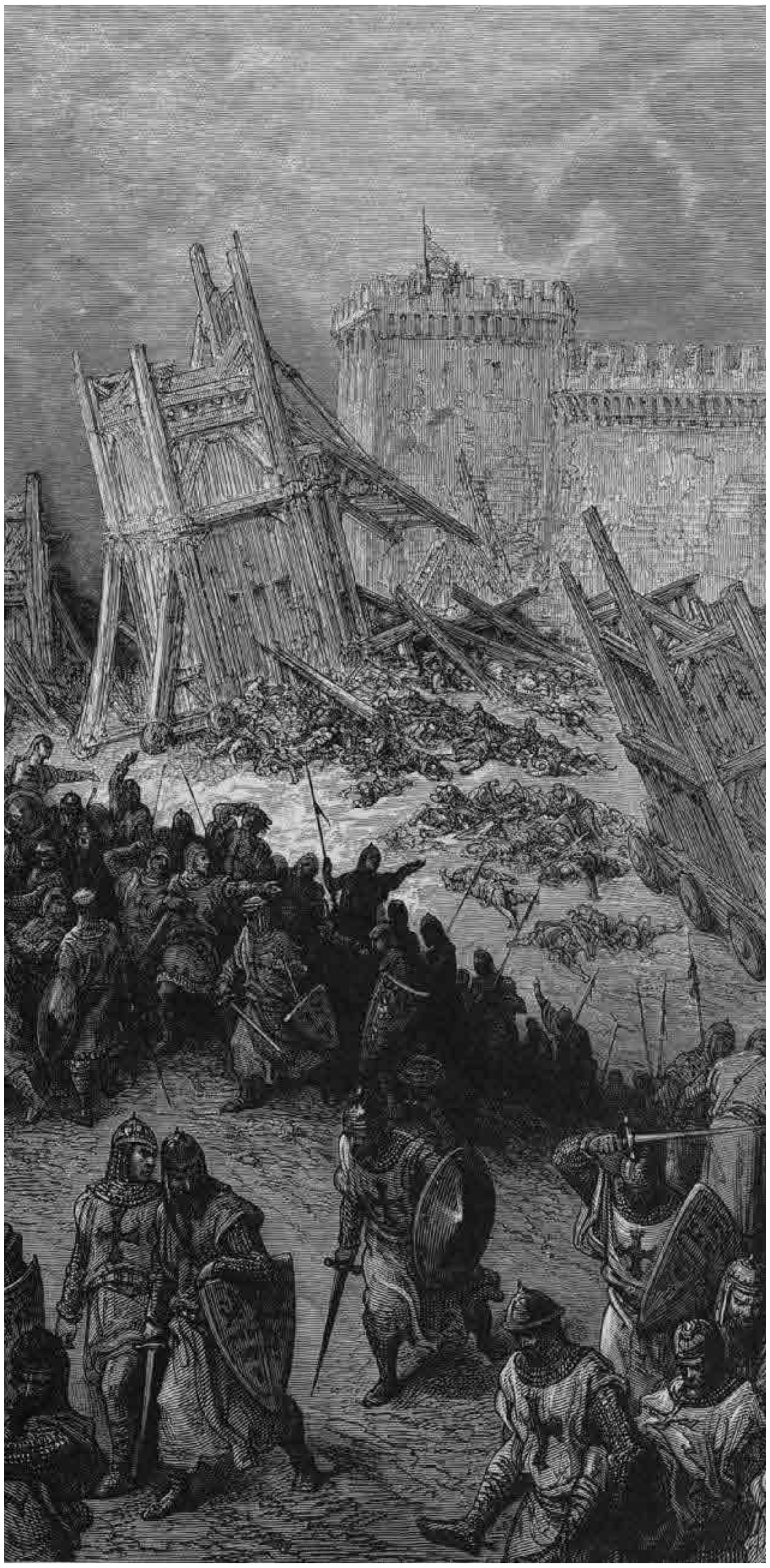


Gustave Doré, *Second Assault of Jerusalem: The Crusaders Repulsed*, illustration from Joseph-François Michaud's *History of the Crusades*, 1877. Woodcut.

The Crusades

(1095-1291)

The history of the crusades begins in 1095 with the proclamation of Pope Urban II during the Council of Clermont in France. He both wanted to comfort his religious power on monarchs and peoples, and to secure the pilgrimage routes to the Holy Land. Indeed, Jerusalem had been under Muslim rule for nearly three centuries and the Byzantine Empire had just lost possession of its territory in Asia Minor. Because the Holy City could not remain any longer in the hands of "heretics", the Christian nations began a crusade in order to " reclaim it". They attained their goal in 1099 when the siege of Jerusalem ended and the crusaders gained entry into the town. This battle signalled the birth of the Frankish Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The story of West and East battling for domination lasted two centuries, marked by nine crusades and battles for power between Christians and Muslims. All the main Christian kingdoms were involved: France, England and the Holy Roman Empire. Their decision led to the occupation of Syrian and Palestinian territories, which became the Crusader states, and the creation of armed religious orders such as the Knights Templars. Mostly, however, it led to confrontations between valourous knights, wanting to serve their religion: Godfrey of Bouillon, Richard the Lionheart, Saladin or the leprous king Baldwin IV of Jerusalem. In the name of religion, they fought long and violent battles. One of the bloodiest confrontations was the Battle of Hattin in 1187, where the Christian army was almost destroyed by Saladin.

The crusades were not only a matter of religion. They also became a commercial and political issue within the Mediterranean. Throughout the 13th century, the Christians had difficulties surviving in the East. Nevertheless they won an important battle in 1204, taking Constantinople from the Greeks. Finally, with the fall of Acre in 1291 the last traces of Christian rule in the Middle East disappeared.

Siege of Jerusalem
(7 June – 15 July, 1099)

The Commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage and strictness. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 1, 9)

The influence of the Church was never greater than in the 11th and 12th centuries. Rome had then no dissenters. Hers was the one recognised religion, and the fervour of her priesthood knew no bounds. So long as the Saracens themselves ruled in Syria and Palestine all went smoothly. The pilgrims to the shrine were favourably received, courteously treated, and encouraged to come again or send others. The pilgrims were a source of very considerable revenue to the Saracens. The pious contributions of pilgrims and palmers might have continued to swell the Saracen treasury had not a sudden foe swept down upon and robbed them of Syria and Palestine. These short-sighted marauders then rudely hustled the Christians to one side and contemptuously overturned or defaced the sacred relics themselves. All Christendom was dismayed and outraged at the idea of leaving the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy City, in the possession of a set of infidel Turks who scoffed and derided the very mysteries which were held most sacred.

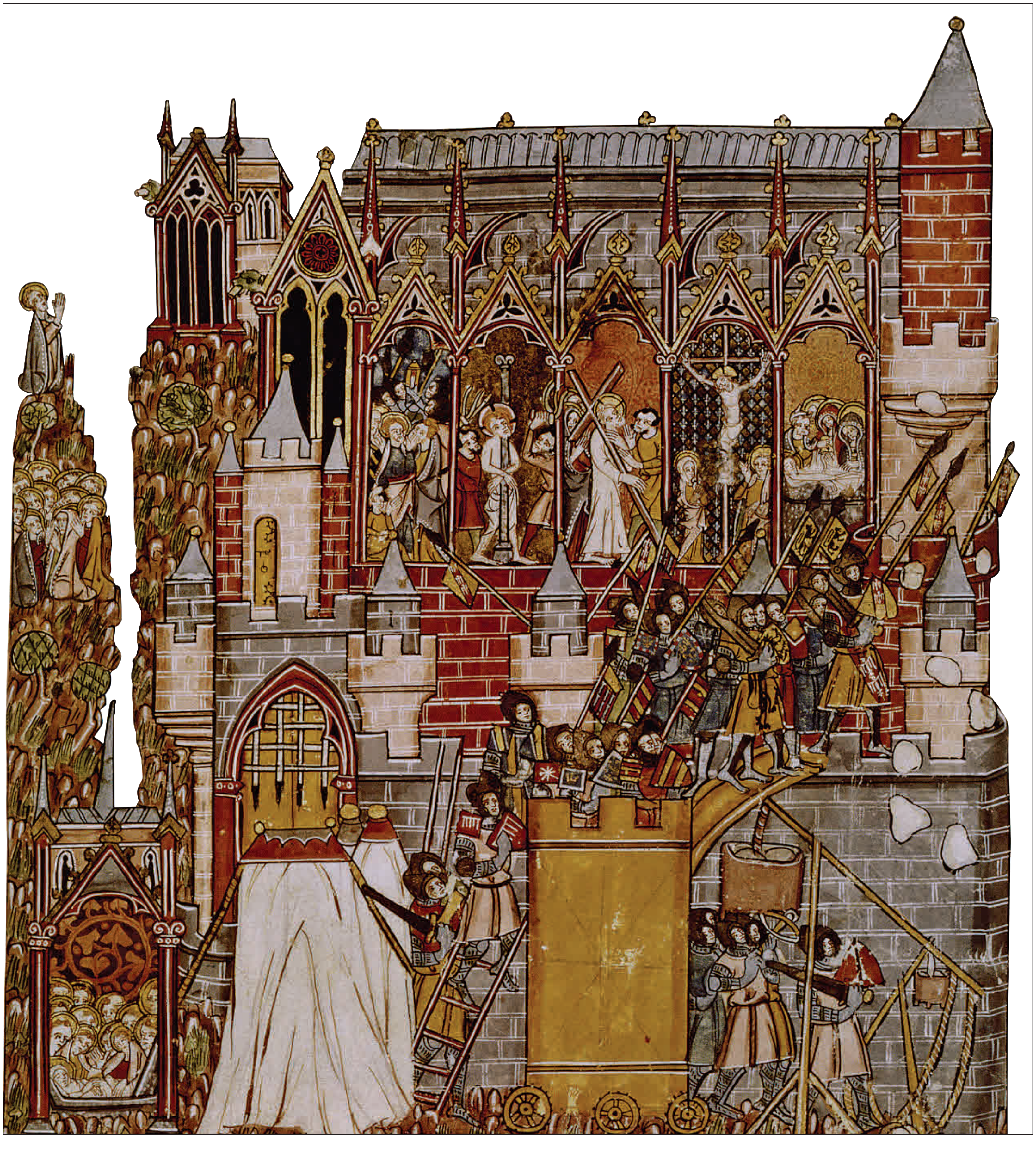
The organisation of the forces began at once. As a badge of their loyalty to the holy cause, the volunteers, as they all were, adopted the cross itself, and this badge was henceforth the designation of their faith and their loyalty. *Les croisés*, the men of the cross, they called themselves, and their cause became *The Crusade*.

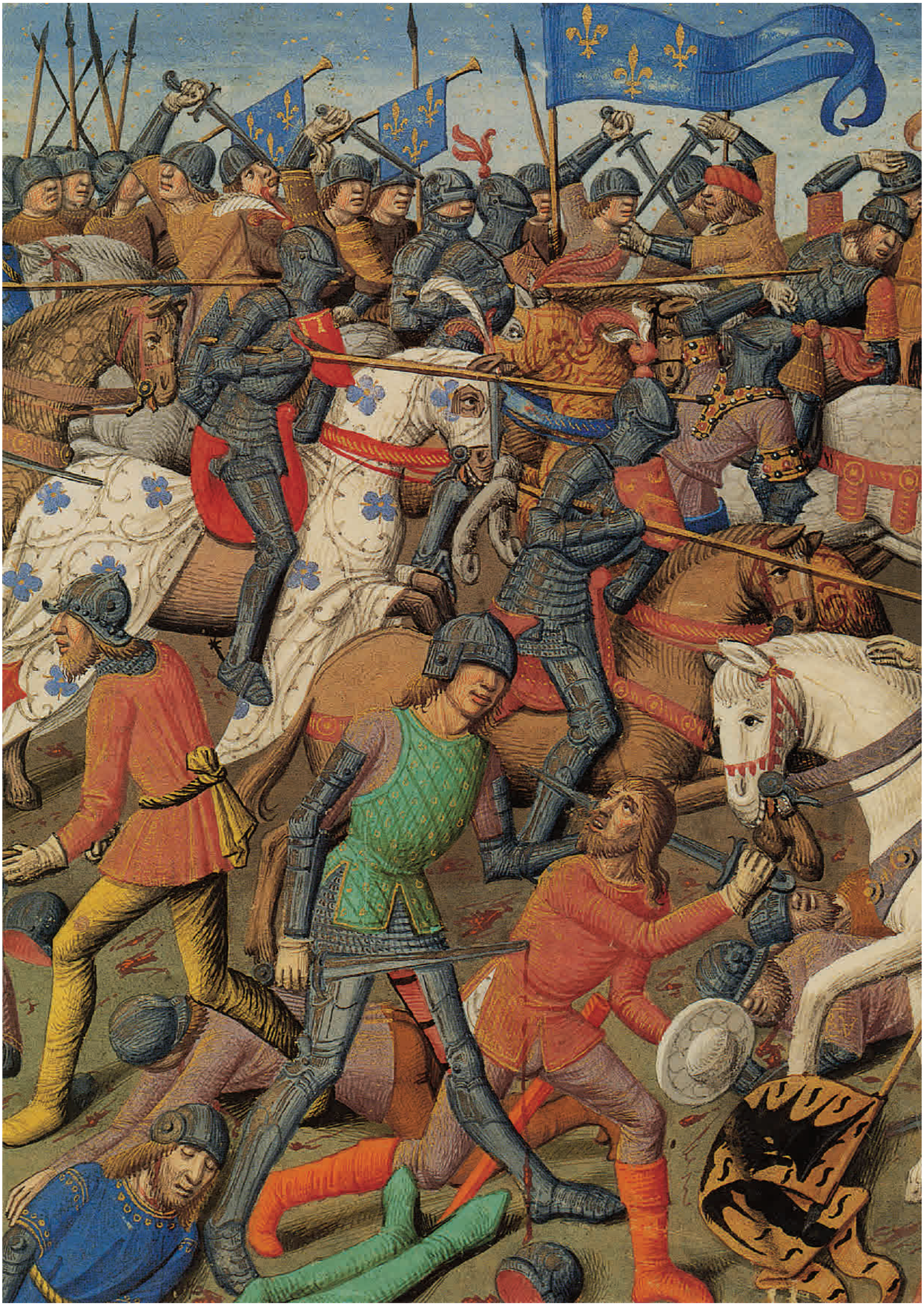
It was a time when the priests of the church had gained their greatest power over all classes, and the uneducated believed that expiation for any excess or outrage could be found in the observances of the church. A holy war meant universal absolution and all over Western Europe thousands swarmed to the banners of the Pope.

It was not until 14 July 1099 that the crusaders were finally led by Godfrey of Bouillon to the great assault of Jerusalem. Over a month had been spent in vigorous preparation, and some ill-directed attacks had been made, but the Genoese builders finally completed strong scaling-towers, to be run up against the solid walls. Then, early on the morning of 14 July, the attack began. Just at three o'clock on that darkened Friday afternoon, nearly eleven centuries before, Jesus Christ had died upon the cross for the redemption of the world. Just at three o'clock on this burning Friday afternoon, the soldiers of the Cross had burst through all obstacles and were masters of Jerusalem. While pious Godfrey and other eminent leaders hastened, barefooted, to prostrate themselves with the priests before the Holy Sepulchre itself, thousands of unmanageable and infuriated soldiery gave themselves up to the wildest deeds of murder and rapine. And now, for nearly ninety years, the powers of Christendom ruled Jerusalem. But it was a troublous and disorderly reign. Then there arose in the east a new and vigorous leader, a prince of Egypt, a brave, politic and powerful soldier. For years he had submitted to invasions of his territory and at last he determined on putting them but of the way and on retaking the capital. He appeared with his army before Jerusalem, and in marked contrast to the conduct of the crusaders eighty-seven years before, the helpless inhabitants were treated with great gentleness and even kindness by the Muslim conqueror. Saladin far better deserved the name of Christian than thousands of those who employed it as a cover for their multitude of sins.

(adapted from: *Famous and decisive battles of the world* by C. King)

The First Crusade: the Siege and Fall of Jerusalem through Crusaders led by Godfrey of Bouillon in 1099, miniature from the Chroniques d'Outremer, 14th century. Illumination.
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.





Battle of Hattin

(4 July, 1187)

We may take it then that an army without its baggage-train is lost; without provisions it is lost; without bases of supply it is lost. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 6)

In the year of the Lord's incarnation 1187, Saladin, the King of Syria gathered together an army as numerous as the sands of the seashore in order to wage war on the land of Juda. The King of Jerusalem also gathered his army from all of Judea and Samaria. Not a man fit for war remained in the cities, towns, or castles without being urged to leave by the king's order. The army was quite large: 1,200 knights, innumerable Turcopoles, and 18,000 or more infantry. They sent to Jerusalem to ask the Patriarch to bring the Holy Cross with him to the camp so that they might become bearers and keepers of the Lord's cross.

Saladin ordered his forces to push on to Tiberias and besiege it. The Syrians fought and won. When the Galileans saw they could not hold out, they yielded the ramparts and the city. Toward evening on Thursday 2 July, the King of Jerusalem called together all the leaders of the army so that they might give council concerning the action to be taken. They all advised that at dawn they should march out, accompanied by the Lord's cross. Thus arrayed they would relieve the city of Tiberias. The Count of Tripoli, when he heard this, spoke: "Tiberias is my city and my wife is there. None of you is so fiercely attached, save to Christianity, as I am to the city. We and the king, however, should not move away from water, food, and other necessities to lead such a multitude of men to death from solitude, hunger, thirst, and scorching heat." But they departed from the advice which would have saved them and others.

On Friday 3 July, therefore, they marched out by troops, leaving behind the necessities of life. They marched to Saffuriyah so that, as was said before, they could go on to Tiberias. At this place they were so constrained by enemy attacks and by thirst that they wished to go no further. The Turks were meanwhile attacking the army's rear, so that the Templars and the others in the rear were barely able to struggle on. And so, in sorrow and anguish, they camped on a dry site where throughout the night the hungry and thirsty men were harassed further by arrows and by the fire's heat and flames. When day had dawned, the King of Syria forsook the city of Tiberias and with his whole army came up to the camping ground to give battle to the Christians. Our men formed their battle lines and hurried to pass through this region in the hope that when they had regained a watering place and had refreshed themselves, they could attack and fight the foe more vigourously. By this time the Saracens had already arrived. The units gathered around the Holy Cross, where they were confused and intermixed here and there. They cried out: "Those who can get through may go, since the battle is not going in our favour. We have now lost even the chance to flee." Meanwhile, thousands and thousands of Syrians were charging at the Christians, shooting arrows and killing them.

(adapted from: "De Expugatione Terrae Sanctae per Saladinum",
translated by J. Brundage)

A well-painted and convincing battle scene, 4th quarter of 15th century.
From Le Petit Jehan de Saintré by Antoine de La Sale. Illustration.
The British Library, London.

Sieges of Zara and Constantinople

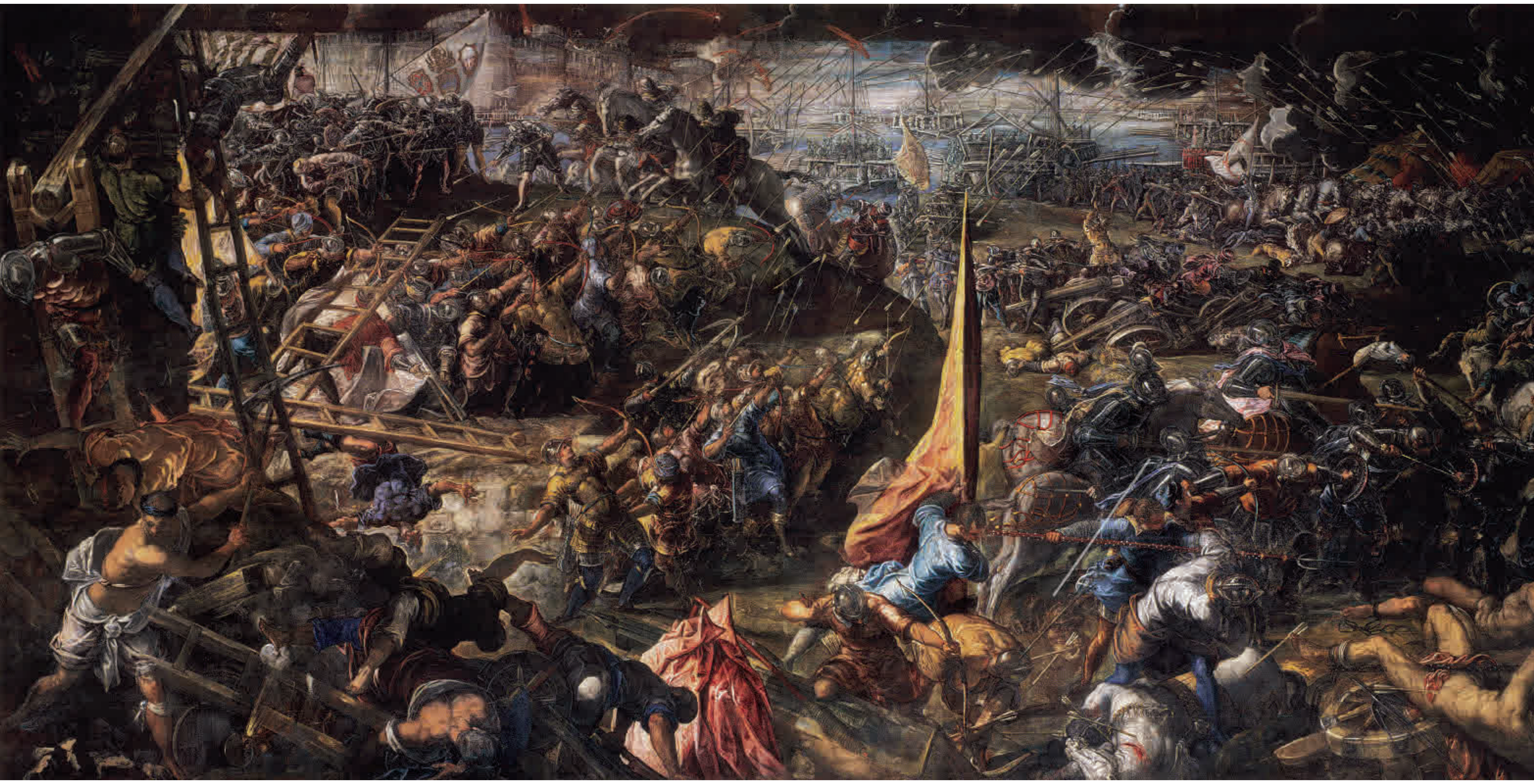
(April, 1204)

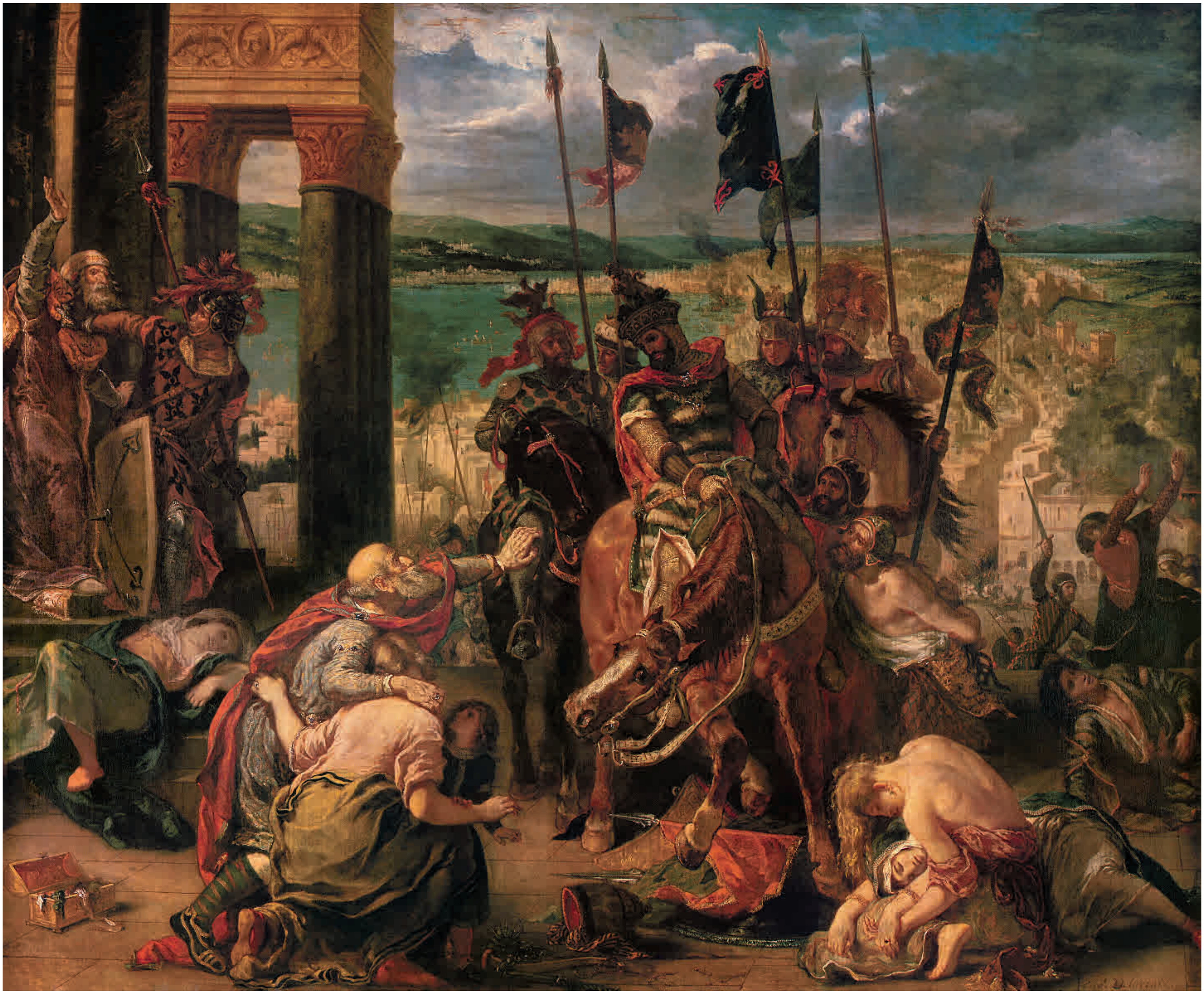
A whole army may be robbed of its spirit; a commander-in-chief may be robbed of his presence of mind. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 27)

The Greeks were an unwarlike people; but they were rich, industrious, and subject to the will of a single man: had that man been capable of fear, when his enemies were at a distance, or of courage, when they approached his person. The first rumour of his nephew's alliance with the French and Venetians was despised by the usurper Alexius: his flatterers persuaded him that in this contempt he was bold and sincere; and each evening, in the close of the banquet, he thrice discomfited the Barbarians of the West. These Barbarians had been justly terrified by the report of his naval power, as the sixteen hundred fishing boats of Constantinople could have manned a fleet, to sink them in the Adriatic, or stop their entrance in the mouth of the Hellespont. But all force may be annihilated by the negligence of the prince and the venality of his ministers. From his dream of pride, Alexius was awakened by the siege of Zara, and the rapid advances of the Latins; as soon as he saw the danger was real, he thought it inevitable, and his vain presumption was lost in abject despondency and despair. He suffered these contemptible Barbarians to pitch their camp in sight of the palace; and his apprehensions were thinly disguised by the pomp and menace of a suppliant embassy. The sovereign of the Romans was astonished (his ambassadors were instructed to say) at the hostile appearance of the strangers. If these pilgrims were sincere in their vow for the deliverance of Jerusalem, his voice must applaud, and his treasures should assist, their pious design. But, should they dare to invade the sanctuary of empire, their numbers, were they ten times more considerable, should not protect them from his just resentment. The answer of the doge and barons was simple and magnanimous. "In the cause of honour and justice," they said, "we despise the usurper of Greece, his threats, and his offers. Our friendship and his allegiance are due to the lawful heir, to the young prince, who is seated among us, let him not insult us by a second message; our reply will be made in arms, in the palace of Constantinople."

On the tenth day of their encampment at Scutari, the crusaders prepared themselves, as soldiers and as Catholics, for the passage of the Bosphorus. On this memorable day, which happened to be bright and pleasant, the Latins were distributed in six battles or divisions; the first, or vanguard, was led by the Count of Flanders, one of the most powerful of the Christian princes in the skill and number of his crossbows. The four successive Battles of the French were commanded by his brother Henry, the counts of St Pol and Blois, and Matthew of Montmorency; the last of whom was honoured by the voluntary service of the marshal and nobles of Champagne. The sixth division, the rear-guard and reserve of the army, was conducted by the marquis of Montferrat, at the head of the Germans and Lombards.

Tintoretto (**Jacopo Robusti**), *Conquest of Zara*, 1584.
Oil on canvas.
Sala dello Scrutinio, Palazzo Ducale, Venice.



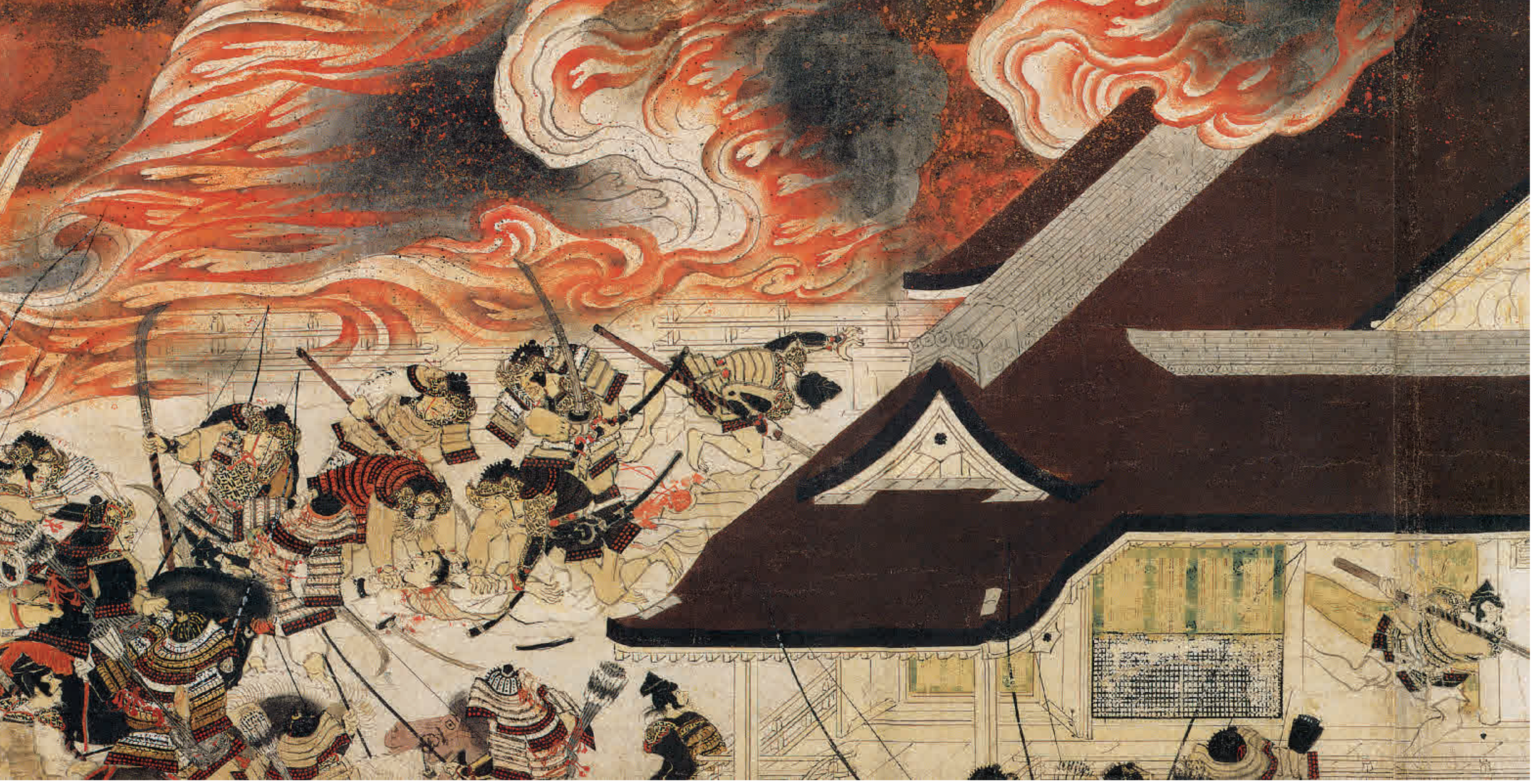


The six divisions traversed the Bosphorus, without encountering an enemy or an obstacle: to land the foremost was the wish, to conquer or die was the resolution, of every division and of every soldier. Jealous of the pre-eminence of danger, the knights in their heavy armour leaped into the sea, when it rose as high as their girdle; the sergeants and archers were animated by their valour; and the squires, letting down the drawbridges of the palanders, led the horses to the shore. Before their squadrons could mount, and form, and couch their lances, the seventy thousand Greeks had vanished from their sight: the timid Alexius gave the example to his troops; and it was only by the plunder of his rich pavilions that the Latins were informed that they had fought against an emperor. In the first consternation of the flying enemy, they resolved, by a double attack, to open the entrance of the harbour. The tower of Galata, in the suburb of Pera, was attacked and stormed by the French, while the Venetians assumed the more difficult task of forcing the boom or chain that was stretched from that tower to the Byzantine shore. After some fruitless attempts, their intrepid perseverance prevailed: twenty ships of war, the relics of the Grecian navy, were either sunk or taken: the enormous and massy links of iron were cut asunder by the shears, or broken by the weight, of the galleys; and the Venetian fleet, safe and triumphant, rode at anchor in the port of Constantinople. By these daring achievements, a remnant of twenty thousand Latins solicited the license of besieging a capital which contained above four hundred thousand inhabitants.

In the choice of the attack, the French and Venetians were divided by their habits of life and warfare. The former affirmed with truth, that Constantinople was most accessible on the side of the sea and the harbour. The latter might assert with honour, that they had long enough trusted their lives and fortunes to a frail bark and a precarious element, and loudly demanded a trial of knighthood, a firm ground, and a close onset, either on foot or on horseback. The two countries reached a prudent compromise, each one taking to sea or by land, in the service best suited to their character. On the first appearance of a breach, the scaling-ladders were applied: the numbers that defended the vantage ground drove back and oppressed the adventurous Latins; but they admired the resolution of fifteen knights and sergeants, who had gained the ascent, and maintained their perilous station till they were precipitated or made prisoners by the Imperial guards. On the side of the harbour the naval attack was more successfully conducted by the Venetians; and that industrious people employed every resource that was known and practised before the invention of gunpowder. The timid usurper, collecting a treasure of ten thousand pounds of gold, basely deserted his wife, his people, and his fortune; threw himself into a bark; stole through the Bosphorus; and landed in shameful safety in an obscure harbour of Thrace. As soon as they were apprised of his flight, the Greek nobles sought pardon and peace. At the dawn of day, hostilities were suspended, and the Latin chiefs were surprised by a message from the lawful and reigning emperor, who was impatient to embrace his son, and to reward his generous deliverers.

(adapted from: *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by E. Gibbon)

Eugène Delacroix, *The Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople*, 1840.
Oil on canvas, 411 x 497 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Heiji Rebellion

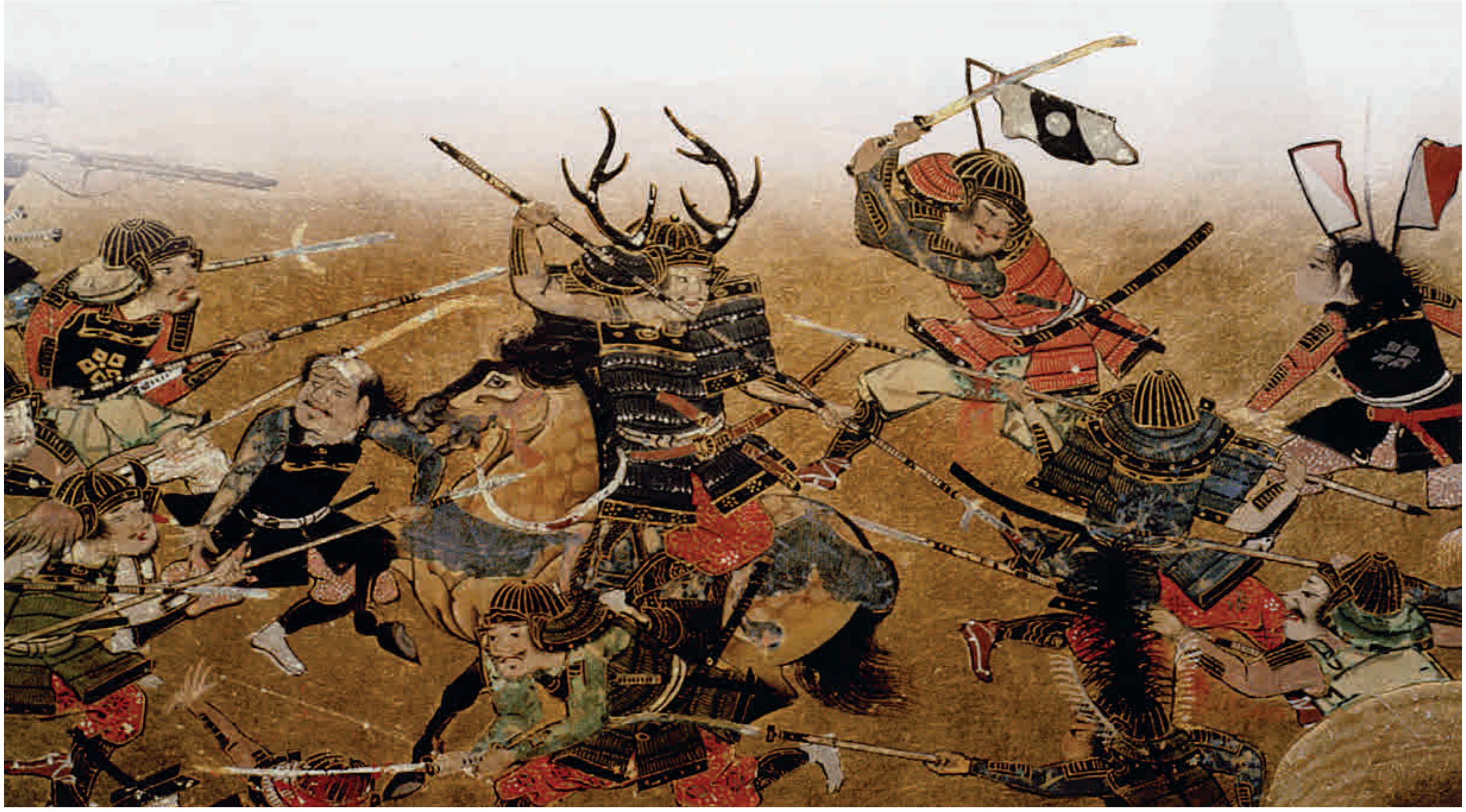
(January – February, 1160)

In raiding and plundering be like fire […] (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 18)

The detail shown above is part of the Heiji Scrolls, an illustrated narrative detailing the siege of Sanjô palace during the Heiji Rebellion, a short conflict between two Japanese clans: the Taira and the Minamoto. The scrolls show warriors of the Minamoto clan attacking the palace, setting fire to the building, killing all those trying to flee and abducting both the former and current emperors to secure their political hegemony. The events after this particular incident are not shown in this set of scrolls, but can be taken from the *Heiji Monogatari Emaki* (Tale of the Heiji Rebellion): returning Taira forces led by Taira no Kiyomori managed to "retrieve" the emperor and re-capture the palace with several ploys that the Minamoto could neither foresee nor oppose due to lack of strategic planning. This escalation of vying for power eventually led to a full-blown civil war – albeit 20 years later – between the two clans. Named the Genpei War, it ended in the destruction of the Taira clan and the Minamoto establishing a Shogunate that, among other reforms, strengthened the predominance of the warrior caste, the samurai.

The Heiji picture scrolls are insofar an important piece of documentation, as they represent the classical Japanese style of painting, Yamato-e. This particular scroll is also among the few surviving pieces from a larger body of work that detailed the whole conflict between the warring clans. Furthermore, they also give invaluable information about equipment and armament of the 12th century samurai. Contrary to the modern popular image, the principal role of the samurai warrior of that period was that of the mounted archer. Heavy armour and high mobility effectively made them "gun platforms" (Turnbull, *Samurai Warfare*, 27), dominating the battlefield through ranged combat.

Night Attack on the Sanjô Palace (detail), 13th century.
From the *Illustrated Scrolls of the Events of the Heiji Era*. Ink and colour on paper, 41.3 x 699.7 cm.
Fenollosa-Weld Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



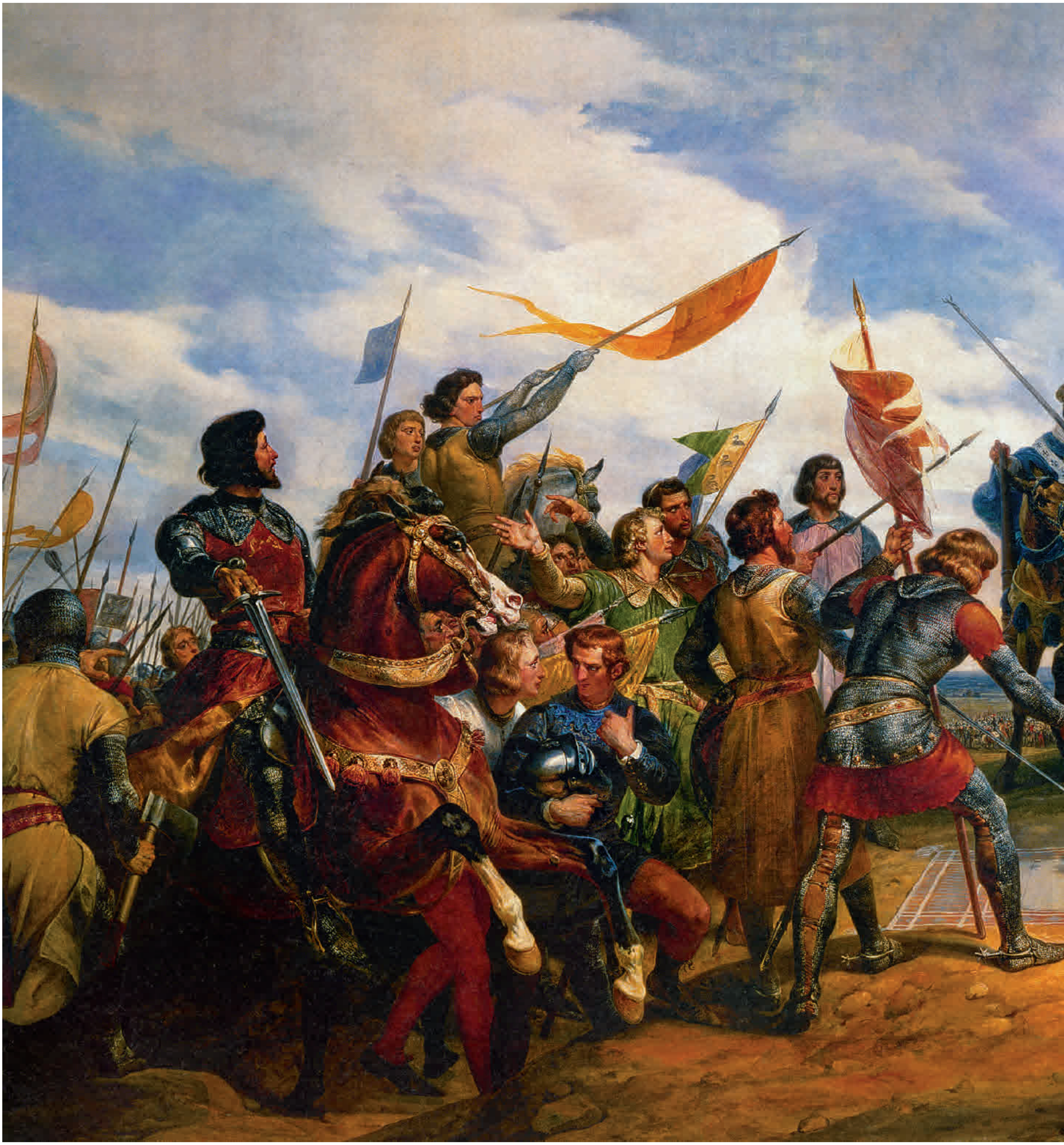
Battle of Ichi-no-Tani

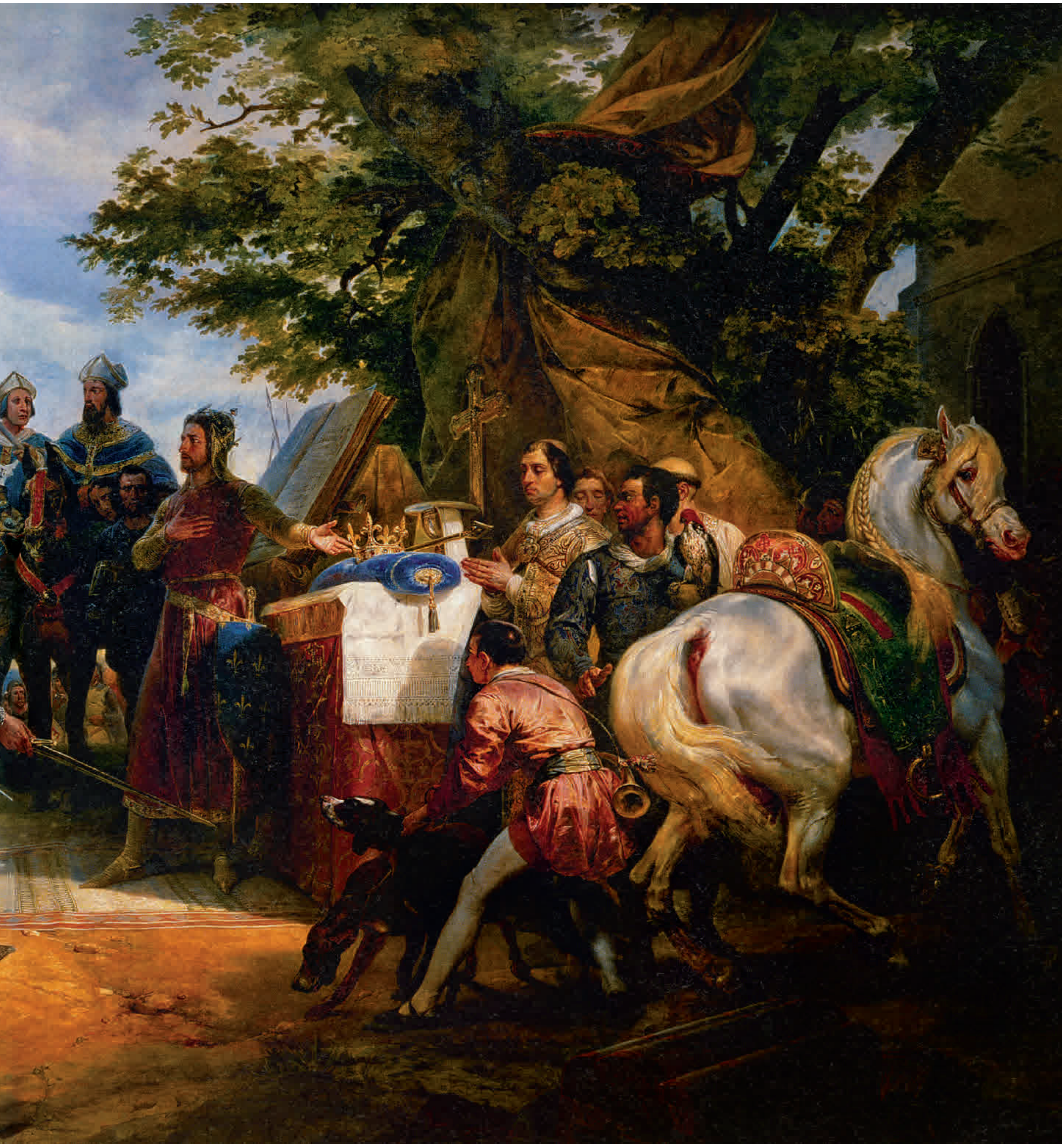
(8 March, 1184)

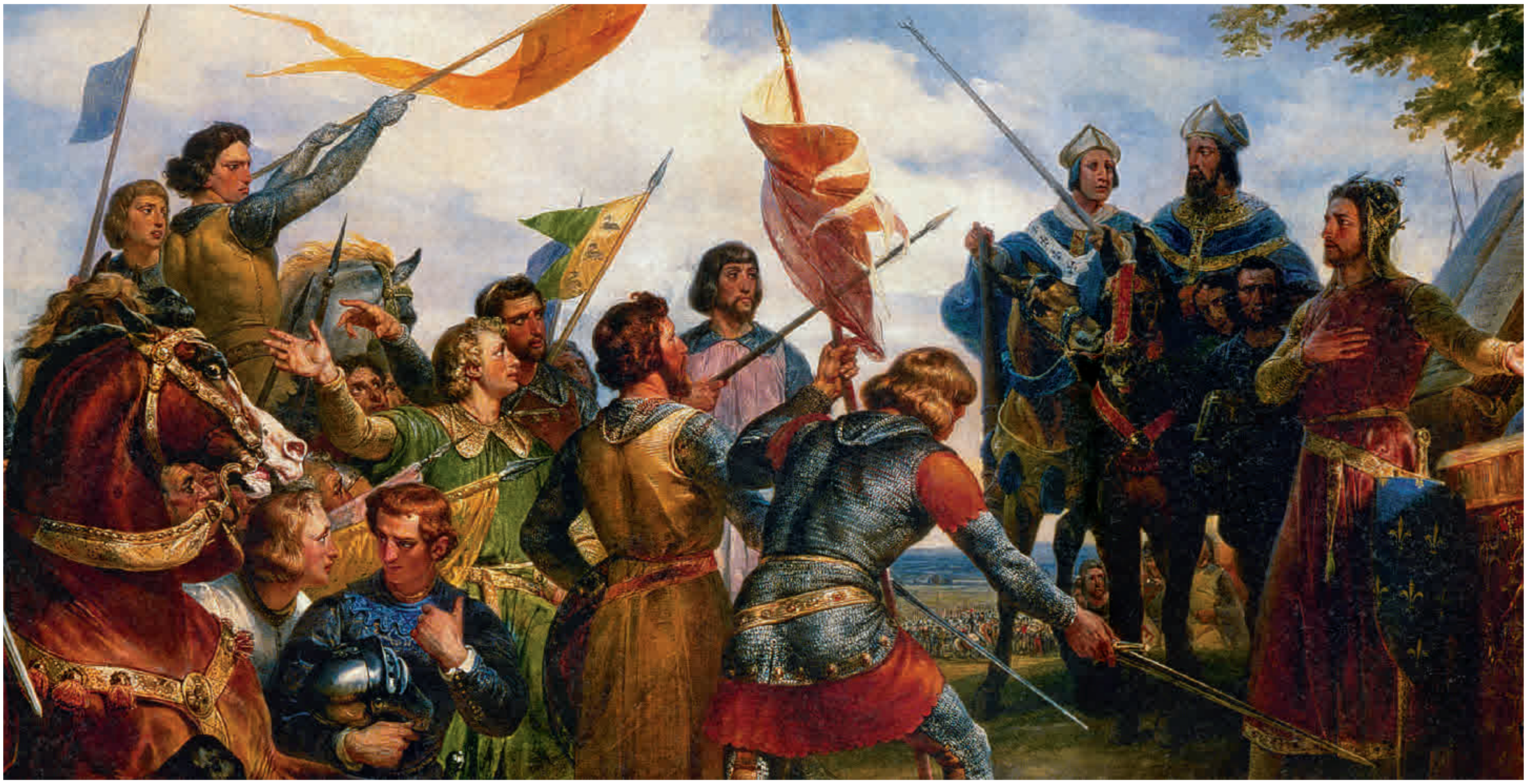
Sun Tzu said: There are five ways of attacking with fire. The first is to burn soldiers in their camp; the second is to burn stores; the third is to burn baggage trains; the fourth is to burn arsenals and magazines; the fifth is to hurl dropping fire amongst the enemy. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 12, 1)

The Battle of Ichi-no-Tani is one of the more famous battles in the Genpei War, mainly due to the presence of high-profile warriors from both clans and the individual duels that were fought during the course of the battle. The Taira clan, against whom the tide of battle had turned in the Battle of Kurikara, were on the retreat from approaching Minamoto forces and decided to entrench themselves in one of their old fortresses, Ichi-no-Tani. Its strategically crucial position is described in Tales of the Heike: "Built on a low ledge against the towering side of a mountain, whose base dropped perpendicularly to a narrow plain which ran to the sea, it was protected from behind by the savageness of the mountain terrain and the difficulty of descent from above. […]" (*Tales from Japan* translated by H. & W. McAlpine). This made the fortress an ideal defensive position against any assault; a fact that the besieging forces had to find out with heavy casualties. However, the Minamoto commander devised a plan to simultaneously attack the castle from three sides with one of the angles of attack being the steep descent from the mountains at the rear of the castle. The attack succeeded and brought the Minamoto forces close enough to indulge in their favourite pastime: arson. With their stronghold on fire, the defenders had no choice but to flee the castle in an attempt to reach their ships. While a substantial number of Taira forces were able to flee, their two commanders were either killed or captured.

Folding screen depicting the siege of Osaka Castle (detail), after 1615.
Ink on paper.
Kuroda Collection, Japan.



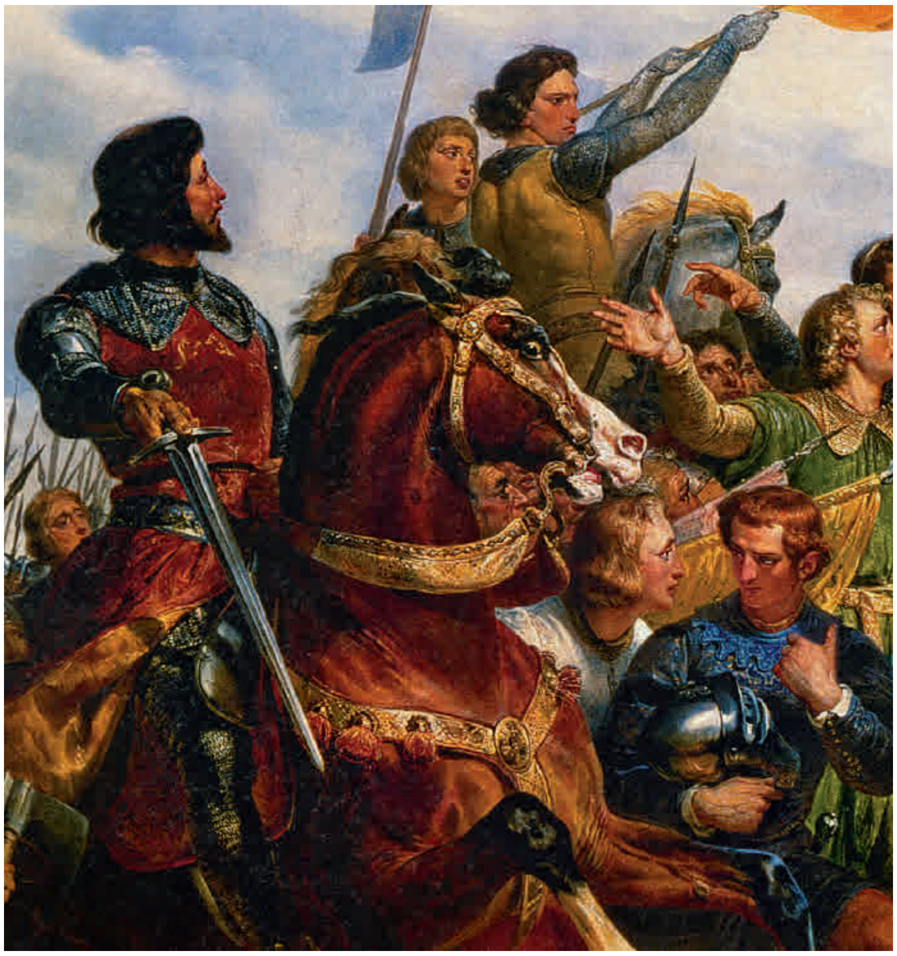


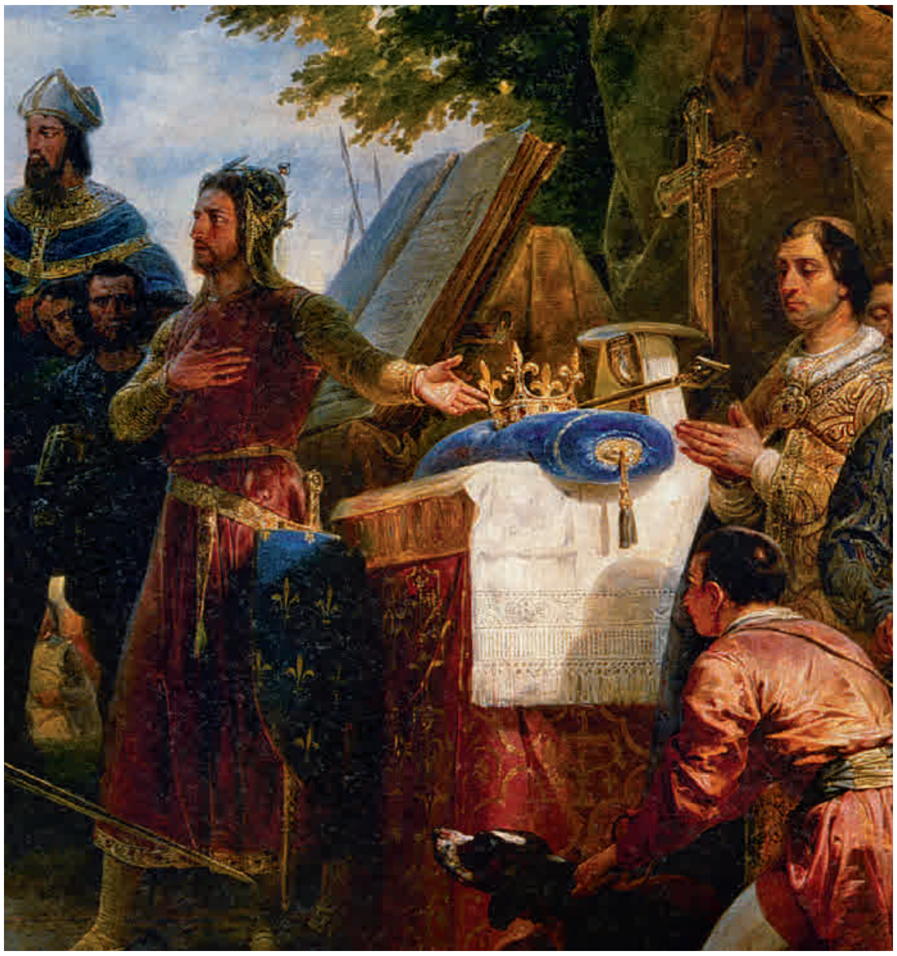


Battle of Bouvines
(27 July, 1214)

Now the general is the bulwark of the State; if the bulwark is complete at all points; the State will be strong; if the bulwark is defective, the State will be weak. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 3, 11)

Bouvines is a village of France, Department of Nord, six miles southeast of Lille. On Sunday 27 July 1214, the armies of Philip II of France and Otho, Emperor of Germany, who was in alliance with John of England, met at Bouvines, and a bloody battle ensued. After a desperate struggle, the Germans were defeated. Philip, at one time, was in imminent personal danger. Trusting to the temper of his armour, he had furiously rushed into the midst of the combatants. A German, on foot, who espied an opening between his visor and cuirass, made a desperate push at his throat with a barbed lance. He missed his aim; but the hook caught the strap of the helmet, and the king was dragged from his horse. The soldier kept his hold; Philip rose to his feet; Otho hastened to overpower his enemy; while the French knights rushed forward to rescue their sovereign. After a desperate conflict, he was disengaged, remounted his horse and continued the battle. The soldiers fought with increased animosity and fury; contending showers of arrows constantly filled the air, and with loud yells the combatants rushed together, striking at each other with sword, lance, and battle-axe. The Emperor Otho fought with the utmost bravery. He wielded an immense one-edged sword, and at each stroke, stunned or unhorsed an opponent. During the battle, he had three chargers killed under him. On one of these occasions,





Du Barre, an athletic knight, seizing him round the waist, endeavoured to carry him off; nor was it without difficulty that he was liberated by the efforts of his guards. On another, he received, on his breast, a stroke from a battle-axe, which was repelled by the strength of his cuirass. A second stroke wounded his horse on the head; and the animal, furious with pain, wheeled round and carried him out of the combat. The Earl of Salisbury, chancing to meet the Bishop of Beauvais, a single-handed combat took place between them. The bishop's profession did not seem to interfere with his passion for fighting; but his only weapon was a club, that he might not, as he pretended, shed blood in violation of his vows. The earl, however, was no match for the bishop, for with one tremendous blow from his bludgeon, the bishop brought his adversary to the ground, and made him his prisoner. The Earl of Boulogne, who, out of respect for the Sunday, had proposed to postpone the battle, and had been called a coward and a traitor for his advice, fought after his companions had fled, and refused to accompany them. At length his horse was killed beneath him, and unable to rise, he surrendered to De Guerin, bishop elect of Senlis. The Earl of Flanders was wounded and taken prisoner by the French. The forces of Otho were utterly defeated and put to rout, and this defeat broke all the measures of John of England, who solicited, and obtained, from Philip, a truce of five years.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

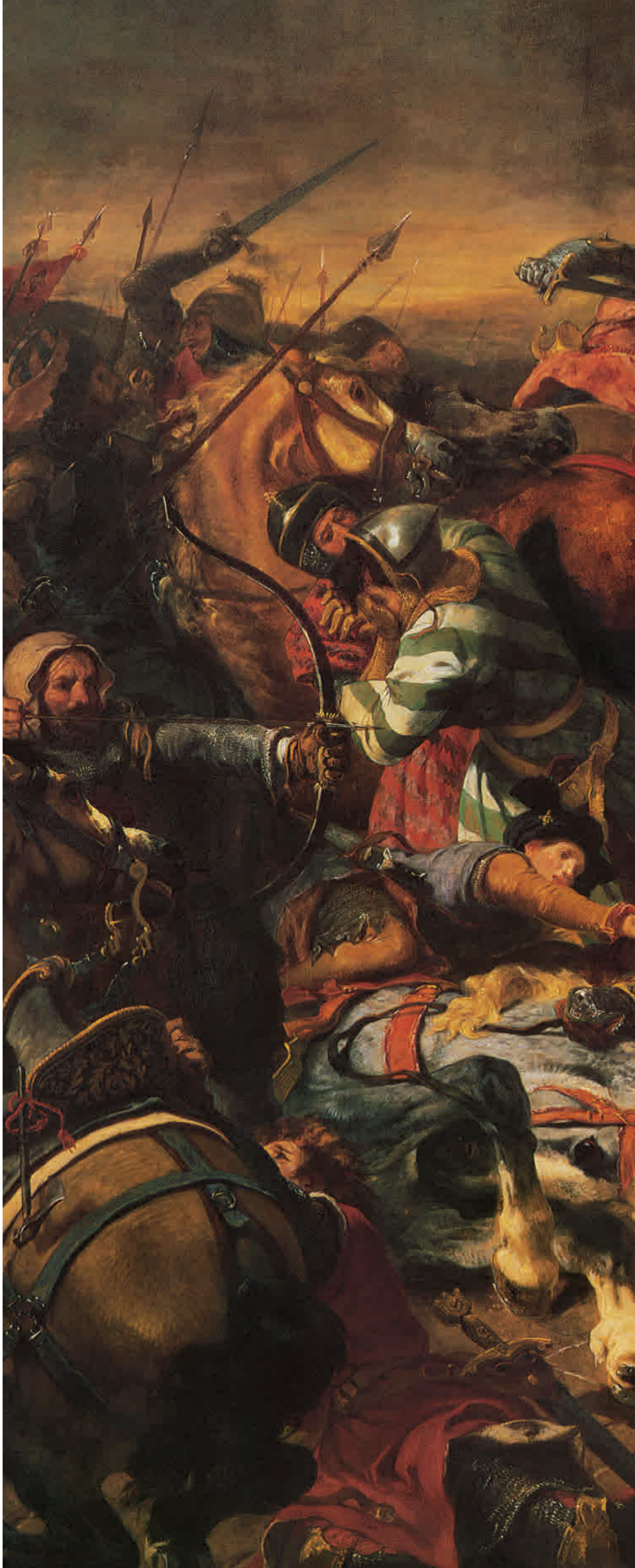
Horace Vernet, *The Battle of Bouvines, 27th July 1214*, 1827.
Oil on canvas, 510 x 998 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. (pp. 80-81, 82, 83)

Battle of Taillebourg

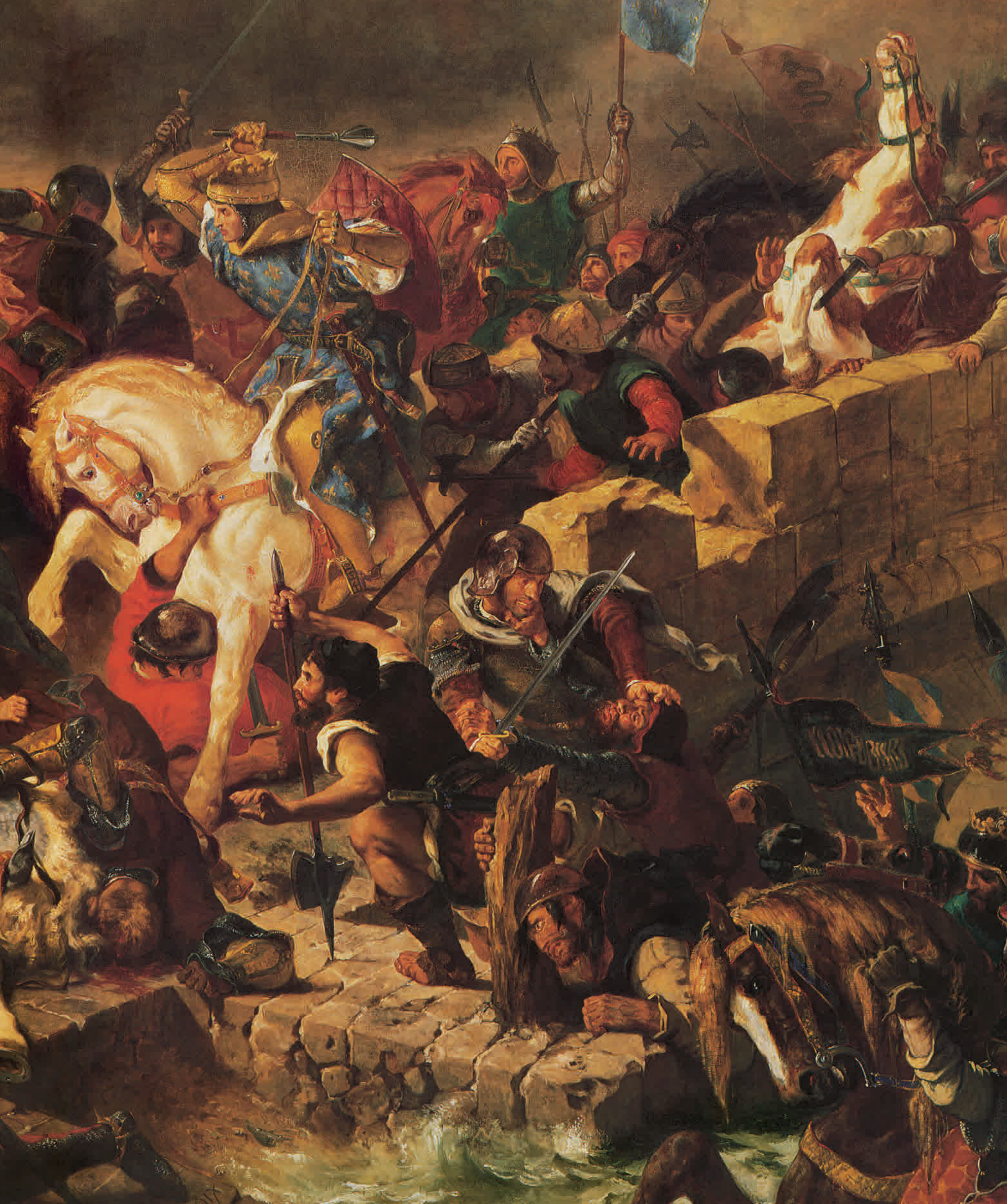
(21 July, 1242)

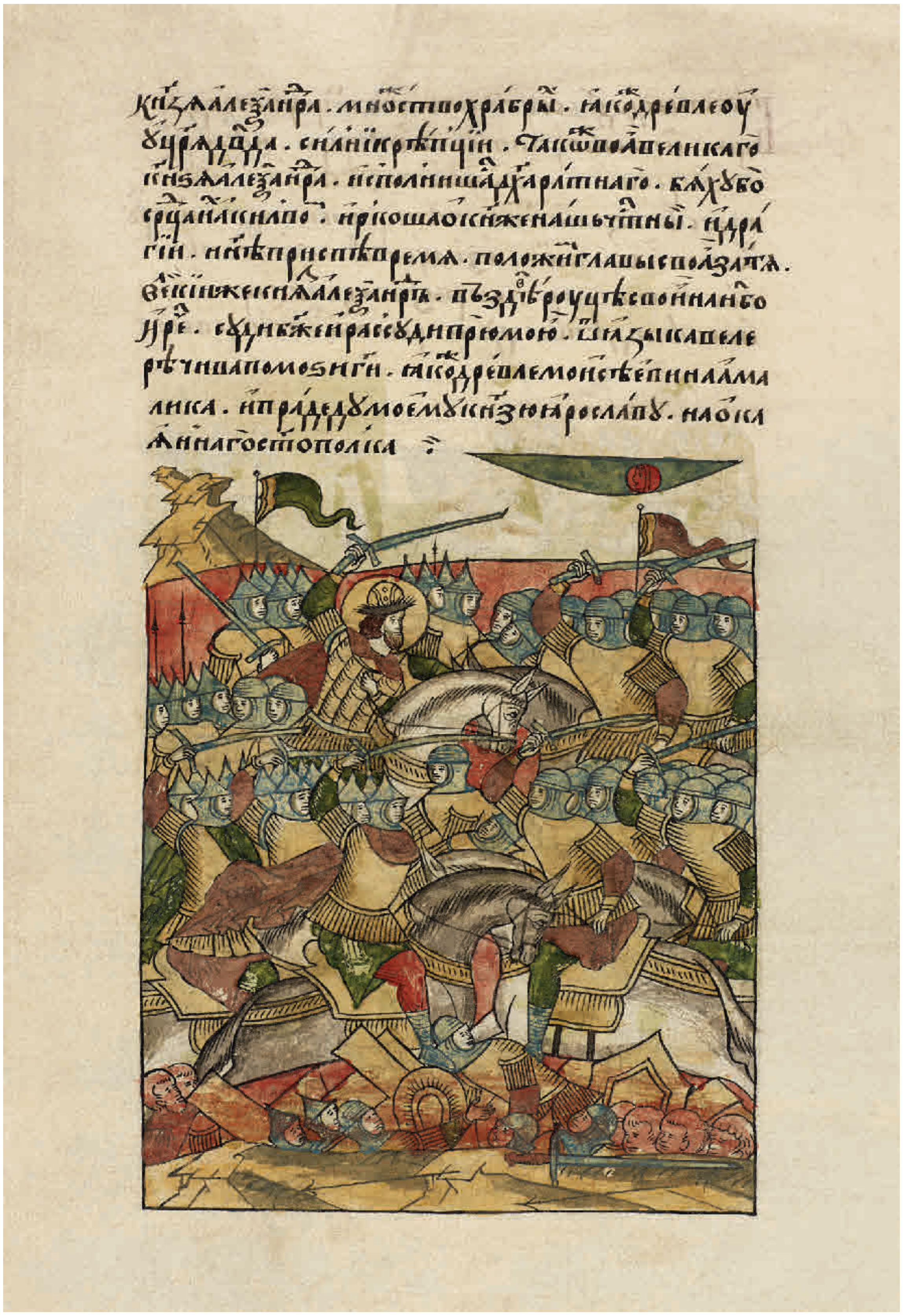
After the lords of France got possession of Montlieu, they took the road to Taillebourg on the Charente. Dinandon de la Perate, a Gascon, was governor of this fortress, an able man at arms, who held the French cheap. The siege of Taillebourg was now formed, and four blockhouses were erected before it. Near Taillebourg was a bridge over the Charente, which the English and Gascons had fortified, so that no vessels from La Rochelle or Saintonge could pass without great danger, unless by paying a toll. The French lords determined to gain this bridge, to facilitate their other attacks, and to be in greater security in their blockhouses. They ordered vessels ready prepared and armed to ascend the Charente from La Rochelle, in which they had placed large bodies of cross-bows and Genoese, to skirmish with those at the bridge. The attack was severe, for the English and Gascons had well fortified the bridge, and they defended it with spirit, as it behoved them to do, for they were vigourously attacked by land and water. This attack on the bridge of Taillebourg was long continued: many gallant actions were performed; but the cross-bows and Genoese in the vessels shot so ably, that those on the bridge scarcely dared to appear and defend themselves. The bridge was carried by storm, and all found there slain or drowned: not one escaped. Thus did the French gain the bridge of Taillebourg. Their sieges were carried on more eagerly for this. Taillebourg is situated three leagues from St Jean d'Angely, and two from Saintes, in the finest country in the world. Dinandon, and those in the castle, were much astonished and vexed at the capture of the bridge; and they had reason, for they lost by it the passage of the river.

(adapted from: *Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries* by Jean Froissart)



Eugène Delacroix, *Battle of Taillebourg, 21st July 1242*, 1837. Oil on canvas, 489 x 554 cm. Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.





кнѧзѧ алеѯандра. мнози бо храбры. ꙗко древле оу
цр҃ѧ двд҃а. силнїи крѣпцыи. тако и мужи великаго
кнѧзѧ алеѯандра. исполнишасѧ дх҃а ратнаго. бѧху бо
сердца ихъ ꙗко лвомъ. и рекоша о кнѧже нашь чтныи. и дра
гїи. нн҃ѣ приспѣ твое врема. положимъ главы своѧ за тѧ.
Великїи же кнѧзь алеѯандръ. воздѣвъ руцѣ свои на нб҃о
и рече. суди ми бж҃е и разсуди прю мою. ѿ ꙗзыка веле
рѣчна и помози ми. ꙗко древле моисѣови на ама
лика. и прадѣду моему кнѧзю ꙗрославу. на ока
ѧннаго стополка ⁘

Battle of Lake Peipus (Battle of the Ice)

(5 April, 1242)

The natural formation of the country is the soldier's best ally; but a power of estimating the adversary, of controlling the forces of victory, and of shrewdly calculating difficulties, dangers and distances, constitutes the test of a great general. [Sun Tzu, Ch. 10, 21]

The Battle of Lake Peipus or the "Battle of the Ice" was a single battle within the wider context of the Northern Crusades, fought between several crusader Orders and the Orthodox Novgorod Republic. The Northern Crusades targeted the pagan lands in Eastern Europe. The attention of the crusaders, especially of the Order of the Teutonic Knights, also turned towards the wealthy republics of Novgorod. They were supported in that endeavour by Pope Gregory IX, who encouraged the crusaders to embark on the conquest of Orthodox Russia.

When the crusaders, an army of combined forces from the Kingdom of Denmark, the Teutonic Order, the diocese of Dorpat and Estonian auxiliaries, embarked on their quest, they were initially successful as they were able to take Pskov and defeat a detachment of Novgorodian troops. In their plight, the Novgorod authorities turned to Alexander Nevsky, a battle-hardened leader whom they had exiled earlier due to his conflicted relationship with the great landowners and aristocrats, the *boyars*, of the republic. He set out to confront the crusader forces and drew them to a terrain that would prove advantageous for his troops: the frozen Lake Peipus on the border between Estonia and Russia. The *Novgorod First Chronicle* has a short description of the battle:

"Knyaz Olexander with the men of Novgorod and with his brother Andrei and the men of the Lower country went, in the winter, in great strength against the land of the Chud people, against the Nemtsy [Rus. for "Germans"], that they might not boast, saying : "We will humble the Sloven race under us," […] And the Knyaz turned back to the lake and the Nemtsy and Chud men went after them. Seeing this, Knyaz Olexander and all the men of Novgorod drew up their forces by Lake Chud at Uzmen by the Raven's rock; and the Nemtsy and Chud men rode at them driving themselves like a wedge through their army; and there was a great slaughter of Nemtsy and Chud men. And God and St Sophia and the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb, for whose sake the men of Novgorod shed their blood, by the great prayers of those Saints, God helped Knyaz Olexander. And the Nemtsy fell there and the Chud men gave shoulder, and pursuing them fought with them on the ice, seven versts short of the Subol shore. And there fell of the Chud men a countless number; and of the Nemtsy 400, and fifty they took with their hands and brought to Novgorod. […]"

The frozen surface of the lake proved to be too thin for the heavily armoured knights of the Teutonic Order, which led to many of them drowning. Thus, centuries before the European nations would figure out how to stop the onslaught of armoured cavalry, Alexander Nevsky was able to defeat the feared opponents.

This defeat of the crusaders effectively ended their conquest plans for Russia and the Novgorod Republics. The battle itself, and especially Alexander Nevsky, became symbols for the indomitable resistance in the history of Russia. Nevsky was even glorified in 1547 by the Russian Orthodox Church and declared patron saint of soldiers, although his veneration as a saint-like hero already had started centuries earlier. The illumination on the right shows a typical depiction of Alexander Nevsky: With a gloriole, exemplifying his saint-like qualities and clad like a Russian Great Prince of old, leading his warriors against the enemies of Russia.

The Battle of the Ice, from the Illuminated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible,
Laptev volume: *Life of Alexander Nevsky*, 2nd half of the 16th century. Illumination, 40 x 30.3 cm.
Manuscript Department, National Library of Russia, St Petersburg.

Battle of Ain Jalut
(3 September, 1260)

Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 1, 20)

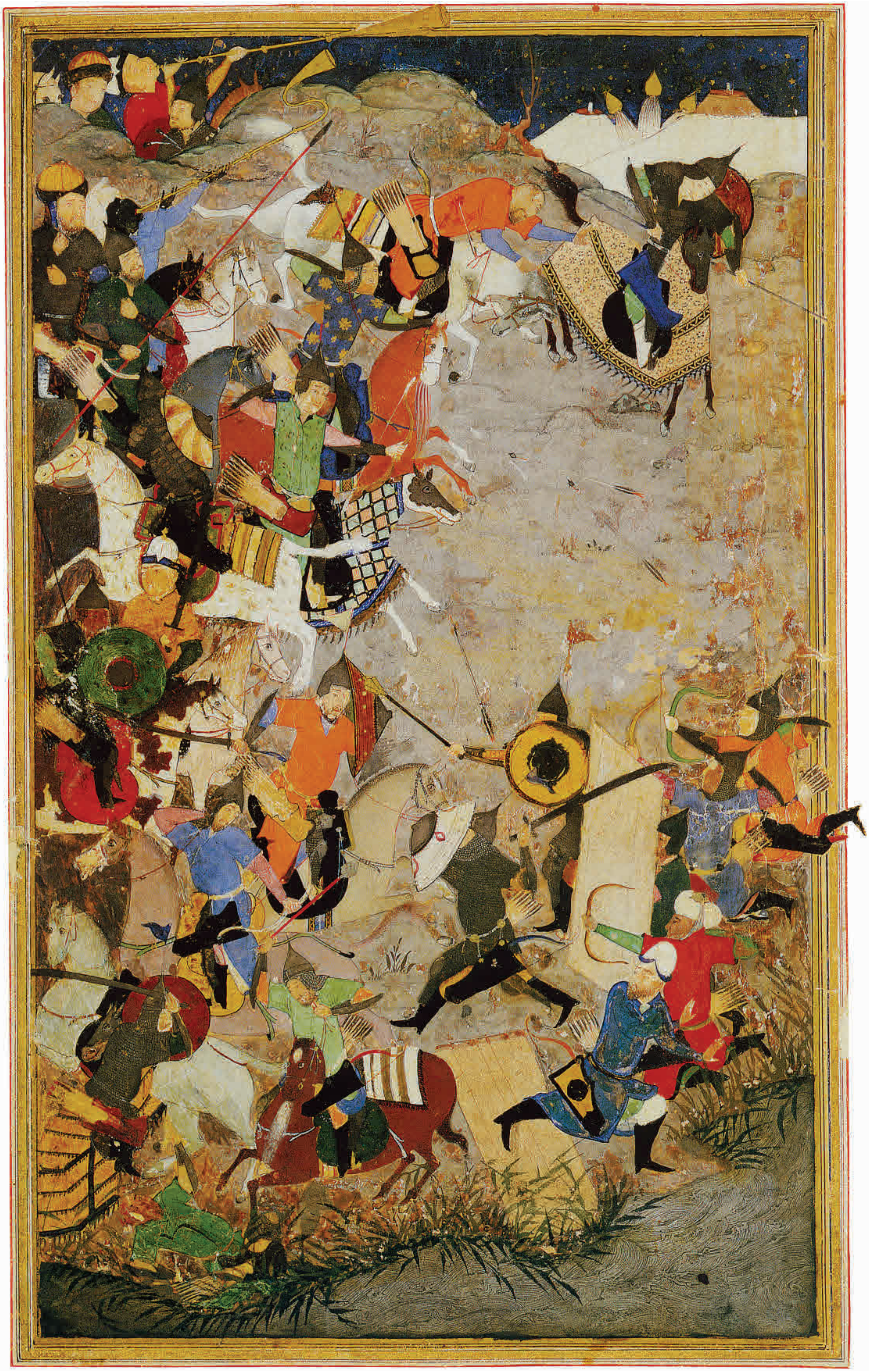
Hulagu, the brother of the Great Khan Mangu [Möngke Khan], after conquering Bagdad was not sated yet and set his eyes on the conquest of Mesopotamia, Syria and Egypt. After some of the rulers and cities at the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers had either surrendered or had been subdued by force, Hulagu demanded that also Nasir [An-Nasir Yusuf], lord of Halab [Aleppo] and Damascus subject himself to Mongol rule. When Nasir, counting on the support of other Syrian rulers and the Lord of Egypt himself, defied him, Halab was besieged (January 1260) and subjected to such abuse that Damascus as well as most of the other cities surrendered without a fight. Nasir fled to Egypt but was betrayed (abducted in Gaza by one of his own servants) and sent to the Mongols, who had successfully invaded Palestine and were preparing for an invasion of Egypt, because Qutuz before had rejected Hulagu's demands and, above all, given the command to decapitate the Mongolian emissary, to cut off any further negotiation.

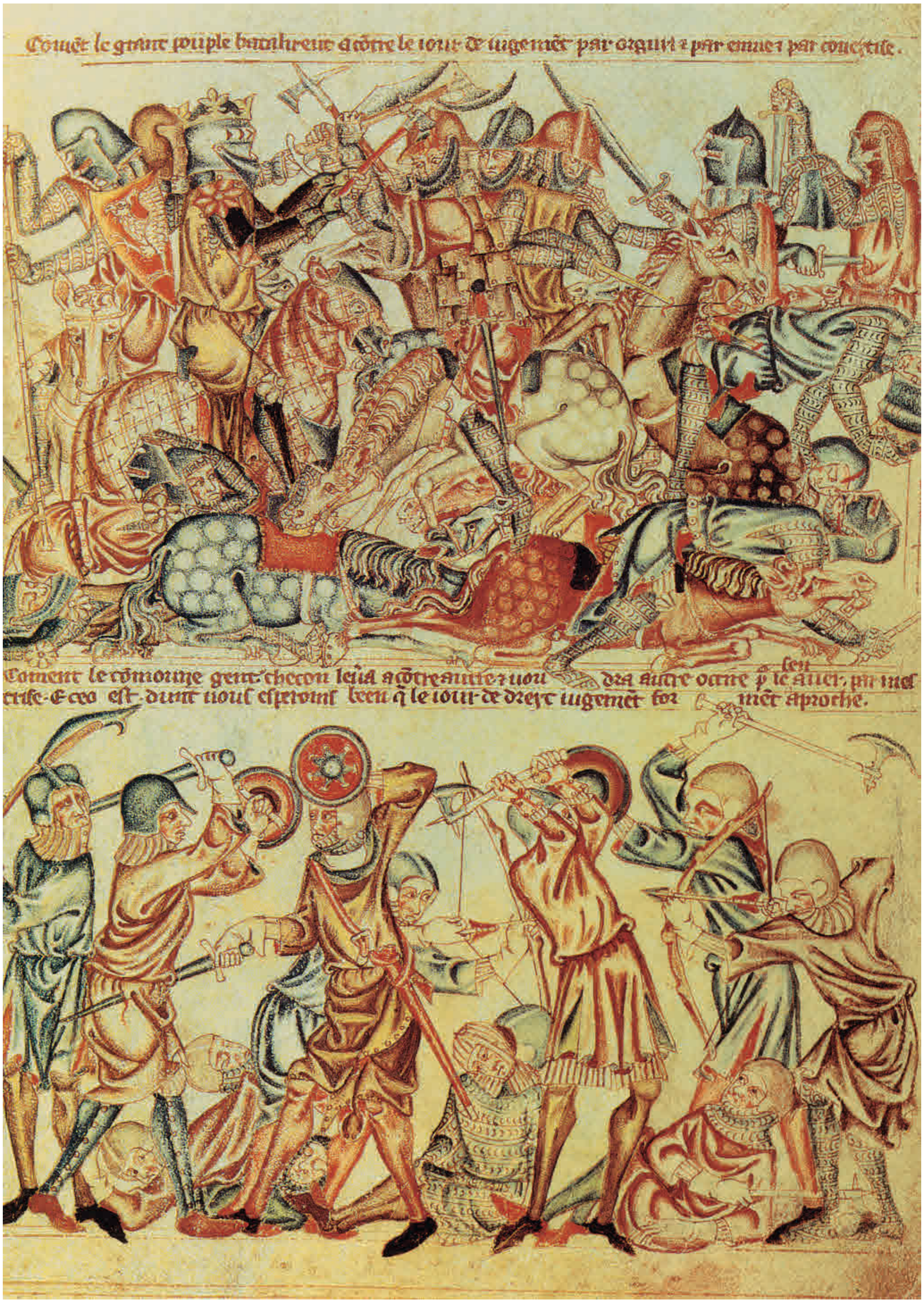
Qutuz, commanding a large army of Egyptians, Bedouins, Turkmens and Syrians, pre-emptively attacked the Mongol vanguard at Gaza, drove them back and decisively defeated the main army after several dogged battles at Ain Jalut, in the vicinity of Beisan [modern-day Beit She'an]. The Mongols had to flee from Syria and were chased not only by Qutuz but also by the whole Muslim population of Syria, who rose against them everywhere. The Syrians also attacked Christians who had supported the Mongol army in their incursion and had mocked the Mohammedans as long as they were under Mongol protection.

Qutuz, who became the ruler of all of Syria through his victory, made members of Ayyubid dynasty again the governors of different Syrian cities. The stewardship of Halab was given to Melik Said, the son of the previous lord of Mosul. This enraged the courageous Mamluk general Baibars, who had asked for the position himself, to such a degree that he started to plot revenge. Qutuz had given the post to an unimportant prince because he did not want to see it in the hands of a competent general who, sooner or later, might challenge his rule of Syria; thus Qutuz made plans himself to remove Baibars. While he wanted to wait until his return to Egypt to make his move against the general, Baibars decided to take the first opportunity to assassinate the Sultan – with the approval of several other rulers. He put his plan into motion when Qutuz left his headquarters in the vicinity of Salahieh for a hunting trip. After, Baibars was chosen as Sultan by the other lords and the people of Kahirah, whose governor had immediately subject himself to Baibars, celebrated his arrival in the city with festivities which had originally been organised for the murdered victor of the Battle of Ain Jalut. This was not surprising, as Qutuz and his methods of heavy taxation were not very popular.

(adapted from: *Geschichte der islamitischen Völker von Mohammed bis zur Zeit des Sultan Selim* by G. Weil; transl.)

Workshop of **Kamal al-din Bihzad**, *Fighting on the banks of the Oxus*,
detail from an illustration *Zafar-Nâmeh* ("Book of Victories"), c. late 1480s. Illumination.
John Work Garret Collection, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, John Hopkins University, Baltimore.




Comēt le grant puple batailerunt ācōtre le iour de iugemēt par orguil e par envie e par coveytise.
Coment le cōmoune gent cheron les uns acōtre autres e un des autre ... le aver, par mesprise. E ceo est dunt nous estoms ... le iour de dreyt iugemēt fortment aproche.

Battle of Bannockburn

(23-24 June, 1314)

The general who thoroughly understands the advantages that accompany variation of tactics knows how to handle his troops. The general who does not understand these, may be well acquainted with the configuration of the country, yet he will not be able to turn his knowledge to practical account. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 8, 4-5)

Edward I won a great victory at Falkirk, but he never was able to subdue Scotland. Just before his death the Scots found and crowned a new leader, Robert the Bruce, after John Balliol, previous King of the Scots, was imprisoned and exiled. Edward II was driven for once into activity, and approached with an army to which the chroniclers ascribe the incredible number of 100,000 men. Robert the Bruce had no choice but to await attack at Stirling, but fortunately for him, about 2 miles south of Stirling a small stream, the Bannockburn, flows from west to east, and then curving northwards flows into the Forth. The position chosen for receiving battle was immediately behind this stream. Bruce had to depend, mainly on his spearmen for receiving the charge of the English men-at-arms.

The English host, marching from the direction of Linlithgow, came in sight of the Scottish position in the afternoon. When they were about two miles off, a body of 800 men-at-arms under Clifford was sent forward to try and pass by the left of the Scottish army, between it and the lower course of the burn, so as to reach Stirling Castle. Had this attempt succeeded the castle might have been said to be relieved in time to save the promised surrender: and it was within an ace of succeeding. Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, Bruce's nephew, commanded on the Scottish left; and it was only on Bruce's expressed order, telling him that a rose had fallen from his chaplet, that he hastened with a body of spearmen to place himself, just in time, across their path. The spearmen formed a clump, like a hedgehog with all his spikes out, and the English horsemen were unable to break their array. James of Douglas, seeing that Moray was very hard-pressed, asked the king's permission to go to his assistance. Bruce for the moment allowed his chivalrous instincts to overcome his judgement as a general, and wished to leave Moray to take his chance, but on Douglas' insistence, consented. On the approach of reinforcements, the English saw that the opportunity was lost, and retired. Douglas, in the true spirit of the age, abstained from pursuit.

Edward II, on coming fully in front of the Scots, ordered a halt, but the order was not made known in time to prevent some of the vanguard from coming into collision with them. Early the next morning, the battle commenced in earnest and the authorities are hopelessly at variance as to what happened. Barbour describes the attack of the English men-at-arms on the Scots in their position, with severe fighting which ended in their defeat. The archers, seeing the disaster, tried to shoot over their heads; but many of them, in the excitement of battle shooting straight to their front, "struck a few Scots in the breast and many English in the back." The gross incompetence of Edward II or his advisers, who with all the material for victory in their hands, and the precedent of Falkirk to guide them, threw their advantage away and were responsible for the defeat. The victory at Bannockburn virtually gained the cause of Scottish independence.

(adapted from: *Battles of English History* by H.B. George)

Knights and foot soldiers engage in battle, c. 1327-1335.
From Holkham MSS Vol. IX (Add. MS 47680). Illustration.
The British Library, London.

Battle of Cassel

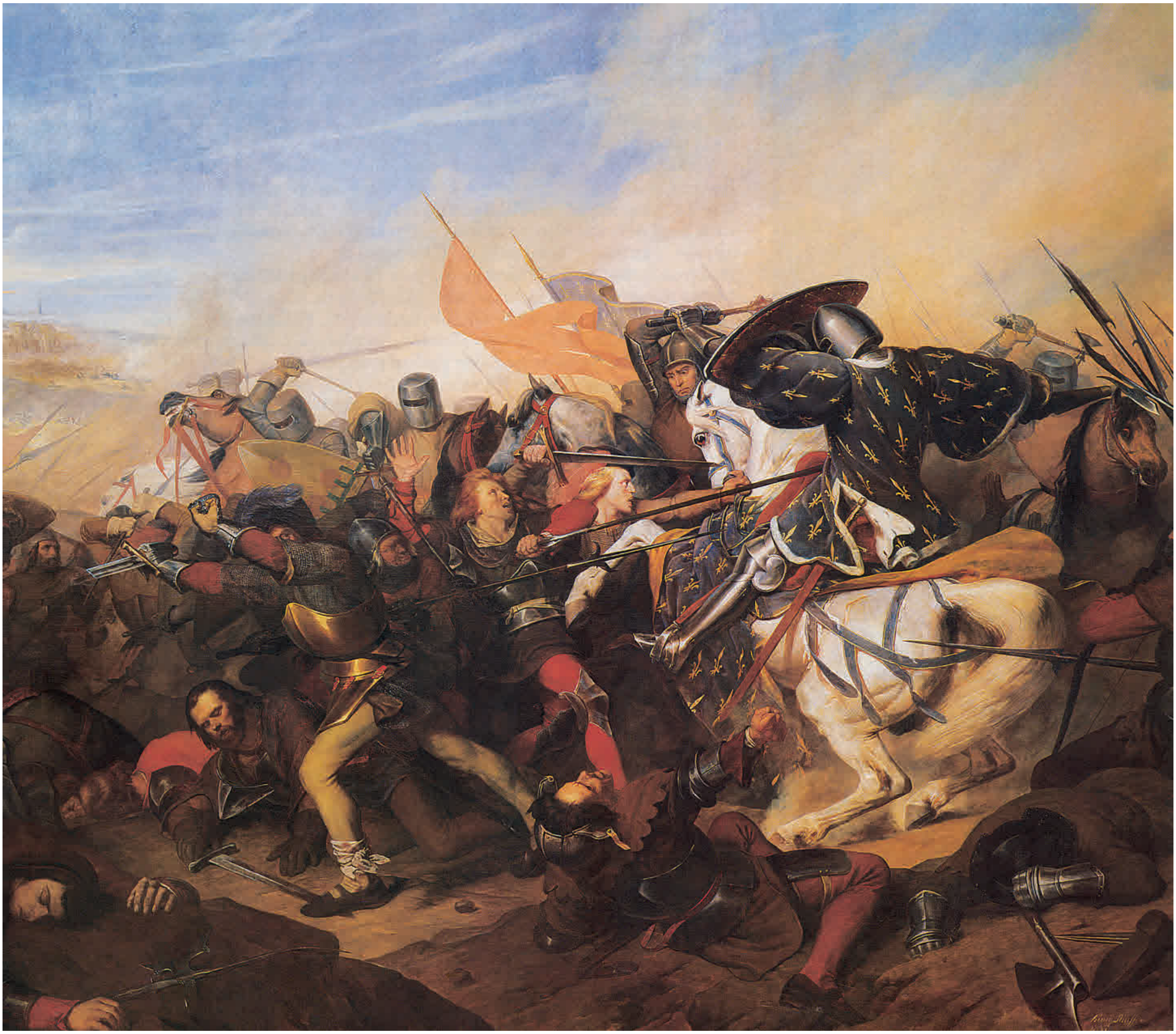
(23 August, 1328)

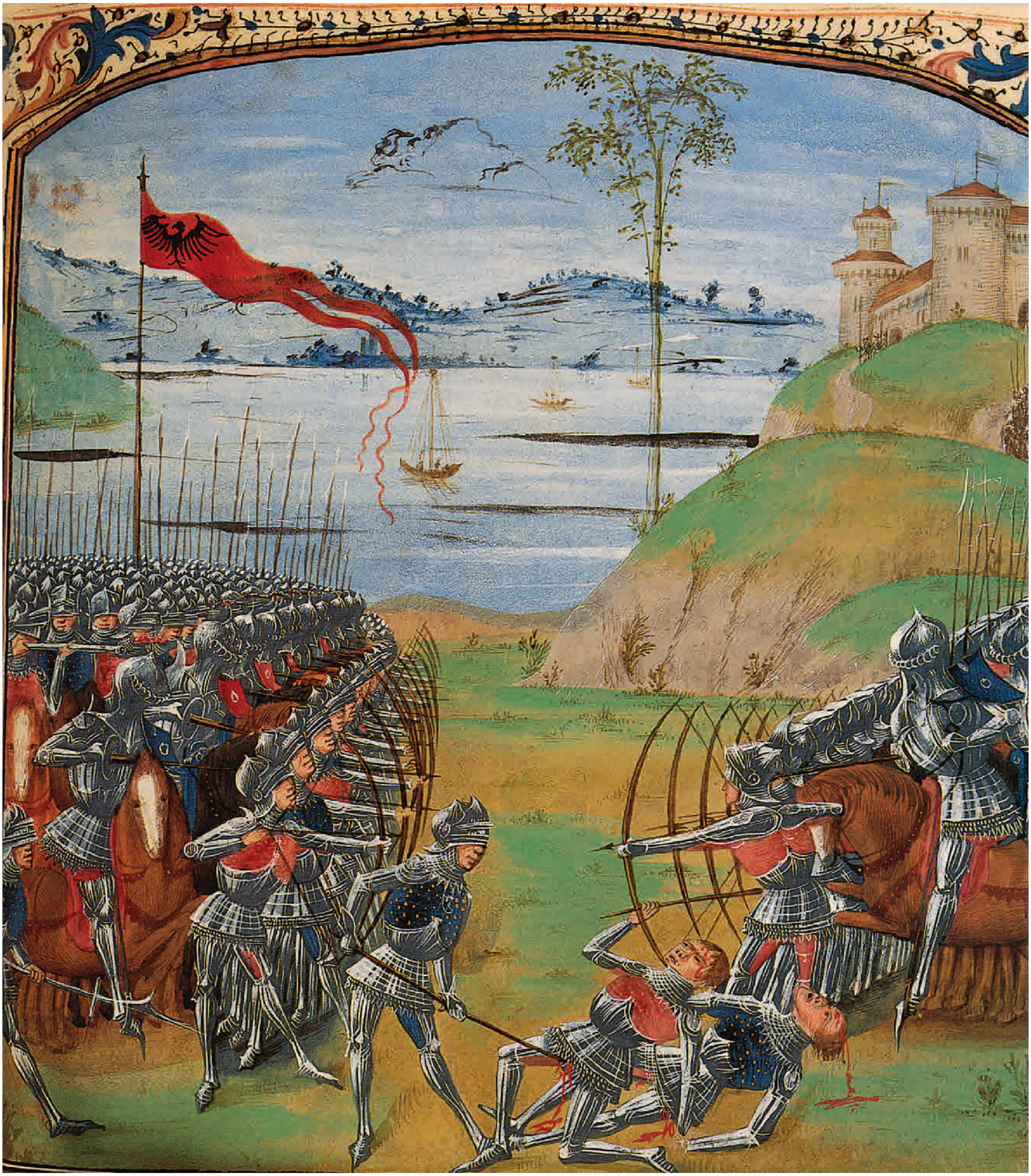
Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 1, 24)

About Easter 1326, the King of France died; following the order of the previous king, the twelve peers and barons of France assembled at Paris without delay, and gave the kingdom, with one consent, to Philip of Valois. Immediately after his Coronation he summoned his barons and men-at-arms, announced his intention of taking to the field in person and went with a powerful army to Cassel, to make war upon the Flemish, especially those of Bruges, Ypres, and of the Franc; 170 banners eagerly ranged themselves under his command. On 22 August The chief of the protestors sent a messenger to formally ask the King of France on which date he would like to have the battle. Being of a socially low rank, his request was promptly dismissed with laughter and contempt. The Boors, posted at Cassel, were under the command of captain Colin Dannequin, a bold and courageous man, and they surprised the French army on the night of 23 August. They marched very quietly without noise in three divisions; the first of which advanced straight to the tents of the king, and was near surprising him, as he was seated at supper, as well as his whole household. The second went to the tents of the King of Bohemia, and almost found him in the same situation. The third division attacked the quarters of the Count of Hainault, and nearly surprised him: they pressed him so closely, that he and his people had scarce time to arm themselves; and the Lord of Beaumont, his brother, and his company, were in a similar situation. All the three divisions came so quickly up to the tents, that neither the lords nor soldiers had time to assemble or properly arm themselves, and they would all have been slain, if it had not been, as it were, a miracle of God: but the panic was of short duration; and when the French recovered from their first alarm, victory was easily attained. Sixteen thousand Flemish soldiers had marched to the attack in three divisions. Three heaps of slain were counted on the morrow in the French lines, amounting altogether to 13,000 corpses; and it is said that Louis, having been admitted to all his insurgent Cities without farther resistance, inflicted death upon 10,000 more of the Rebels, doomed to expiate their opposition to his authority and some coarse insults offered to his ally, by tortures most unprecedented. The French came then to Cassel, and placed there the banners of France, the town having surrendered to the king. Afterward Poperingue, and then Ypres, and all the castlewick of Bergues followed, and received the Count Lewis their lord, and swore fidelity and loyalty to him for the time to come. The king soon after set out with his troops towards Paris, where, and in the neighbourhood, he stayed some time. He was much praised and honoured for this enterprise, and for the service he had rendered to the Count Lewis, his brother. He lived in great prosperity and increased the royal power. No king of France, it was said, had ever kept so royal a state as King Philip.

(adapted from: *Chronicles of England, France, Spain, and the Adjoining Countries* by Jean Froissart)

Henry Scheffer, *Battle of Cassel, 23rd August 1328*, 1837.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 543 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.





Battle of Crécy

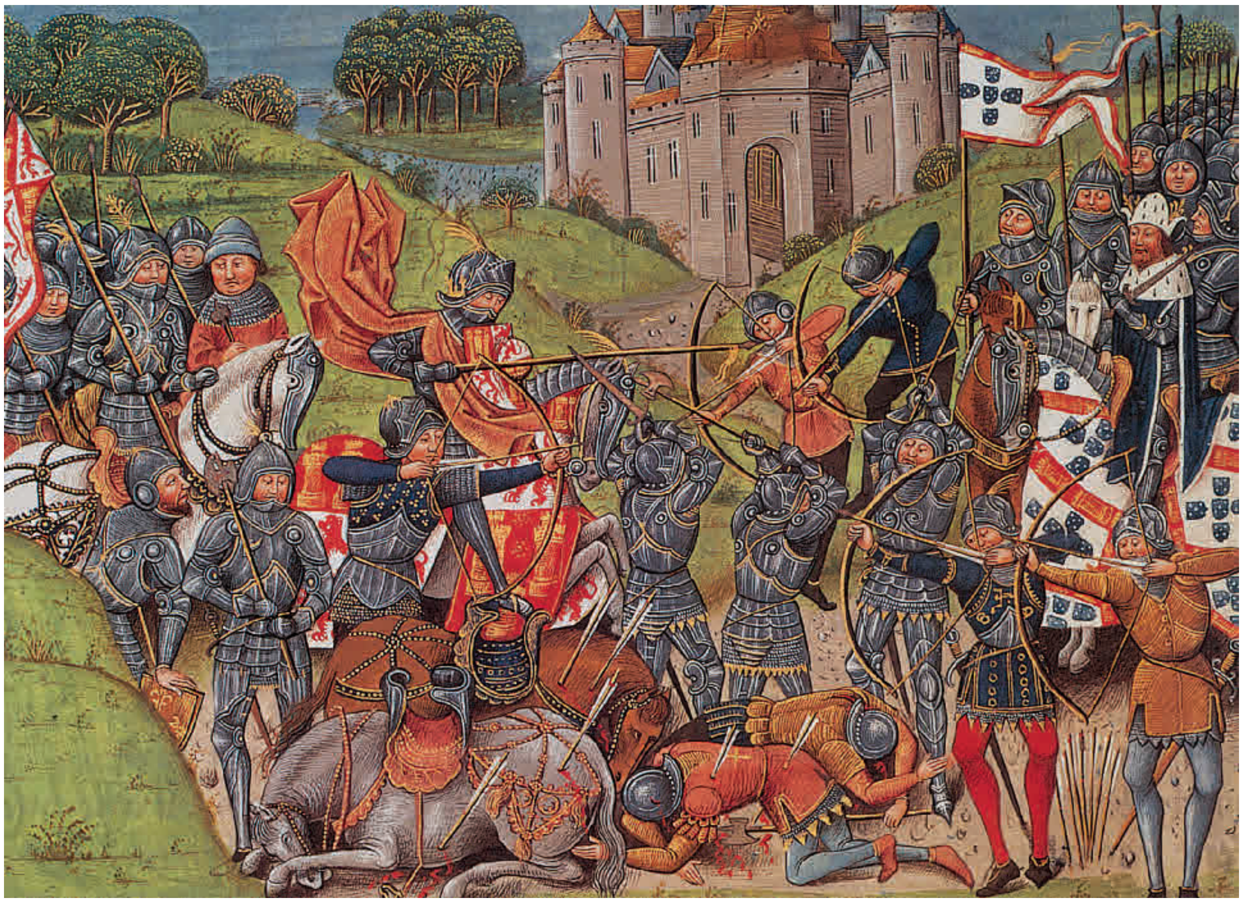
(26 August, 1346)

There are five dangerous faults which may affect a general: (1) recklessness, which leads to destruction; (2) cowardice, which leads to capture; (3) a hasty temper, which can be provoked by insults; (4) a delicacy of honour, which is sensitive to shame; (5) over-solicitude for his men, which exposes him to worry and trouble. These are the five besetting sins of a general, ruinous to the conduct of war. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 8, 12-13)

Finding war inevitable, Edward III thought to rouse the enthusiasm of his subjects by reviving his claim to the French crown. The English Parliament, though desiring peace, probably realised that it was hopeless except at the price of abandoning Guienne, and therefore wisely desired that war should be waged in earnest. The obvious thing for Edward to do with the large expedition he was fitting out was to defend his own provinces, since Flanders now offered a very unpromising field. Instead of this he decided suddenly to invade Normandy and on 12 July he landed at Cape La Hogue. There is no evidence that Edward had formed any coherent plan of operations. Had Edward landed near the mouth of the Seine, at the nearest point to the capital, and marched straight on Paris, he would have had the King of France almost at his mercy. Instead of this, Edward landed at the extremity of the Cotentin peninsula, and then marched in a leisurely way through Normandy, capturing and plundering town after town. Accordingly he encamped on 25 August near the little village of Crécy, and selected a position in which to give battle, into which he moved the next morning. The essential novelty in Edward's tactics, the fact which makes Crécy an epoch in the history of the art of war, was, that having to fight with very inferior numbers he discerned an effective way of combining the two elements of his army. He caused all the men-at-arms to dismount, and placed the horses with the baggage in an enclosed park in rear. The men-at-arms were to serve simply as spearmen, like the Scots at Falkirk and Bannockburn: they were to form the solid line of resistance, while the archers shot down the assailants. Just as the sun was close on its setting, and shining full in the face of the French line, the battle began. The crossbowmen advanced, shouting, but the English never stirred; presently they began to shoot. The English archers then took one step forward, and shot their arrows with such force and quickness that it seemed to be snowing. The crossbow bolts fell short: the clothyard arrows totally discomfited the Genoese, already worn out with a long hot march. Therefore the King of France, with the true feudal contempt for all that was not noble, bade the men-at-arms trample down these rascals. The knights, nothing loth, rode over the unhappy Genoese, and charged tumultuously on the English front. Men and horses went down in heaps before the arrows, which were shot from both flanks into the surging mob. Those who escaped fell furiously on the English line, and were with difficulty kept at bay. Darkness at length put an end to the battle. Edward was far too prudent to attempt a counterattack: he owed his victory to firmly maintaining the position he had chosen, and could not afford to risk a disaster by quitting it. The slaughter on the French side had been frightful – 4,000 knights and men-at-arms, and uncounted multitudes beside: the English loss had naturally been but slight.

(adapted from: *Battles of English History* by H.B. George)

Archers in the front line, 1473.
From a French translation of Caesar's Commentaries (Royal MS 16 G VIII). Illustration.
The British Library, London.



Battle of Agincourt

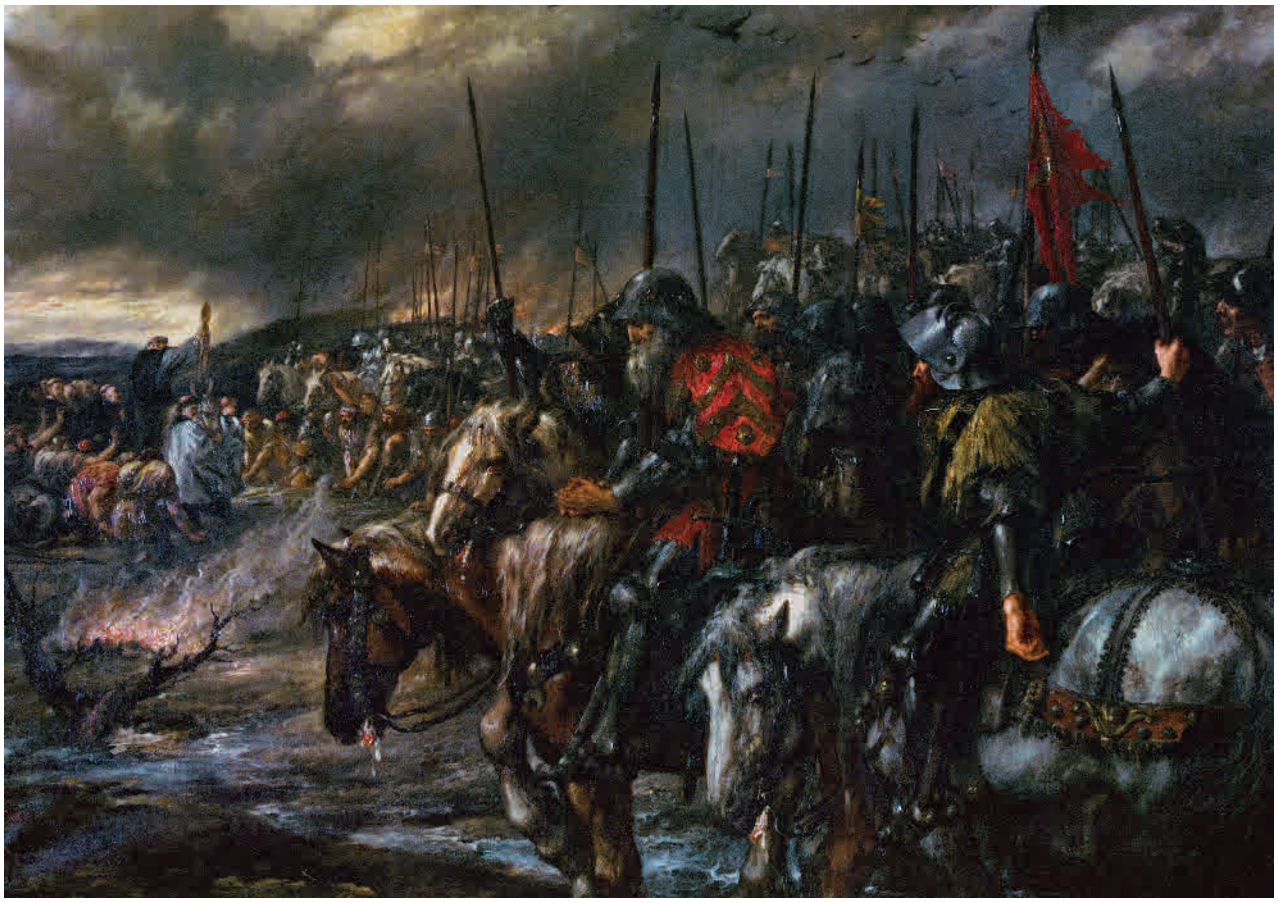
(25 October, 1415)

The principle on which to manage an army is to set up one standard of courage which all must reach. How to make the best of both strong and weak – that is a question involving the proper use of ground. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 32-33)

The Battle of Agincourt was, in itself, a single occurrence, illustrating the valour and steadiness of the English troops, and placing in a conspicuous light the importance of good generalship; but, in its moral and political consequences, it blended itself with a long train of events, contemporary and successive. It exemplified the military character of the two conflicting nations in a very striking manner – the unshrinking intrepidity, the desperate onset, the sustained impetuosity, the untiring exertions of the English soldier; the overweening confidence, the buoyant spirit, the fiery sallies, that render the Frenchman more formidable in assault, than in resistance or retreat. Through many a year of doubtful conflict, the day of Agincourt was well remembered by both parties; and the name of our gallant Harry is still identified with the field of his fame. But the rashness of the enterprise could not be redeemed even by the valour that averted its consequences. Whatever there might be of ability in the tactics of Henry, his strategy was miserable, and the most brilliant and decisive victory on record, gave to the conquerors no other result than a safe retreat.

“And now coming within reach of the enemy, the horsemen of the French posted along the flanks, began to attack our archers on both sides of the army. But, by the will of God, they were quickly compelled, amidst showers of darts, to retreat, and to fly to the hindermost ranks; with the exception of a very few who ran between the archers and the woods,

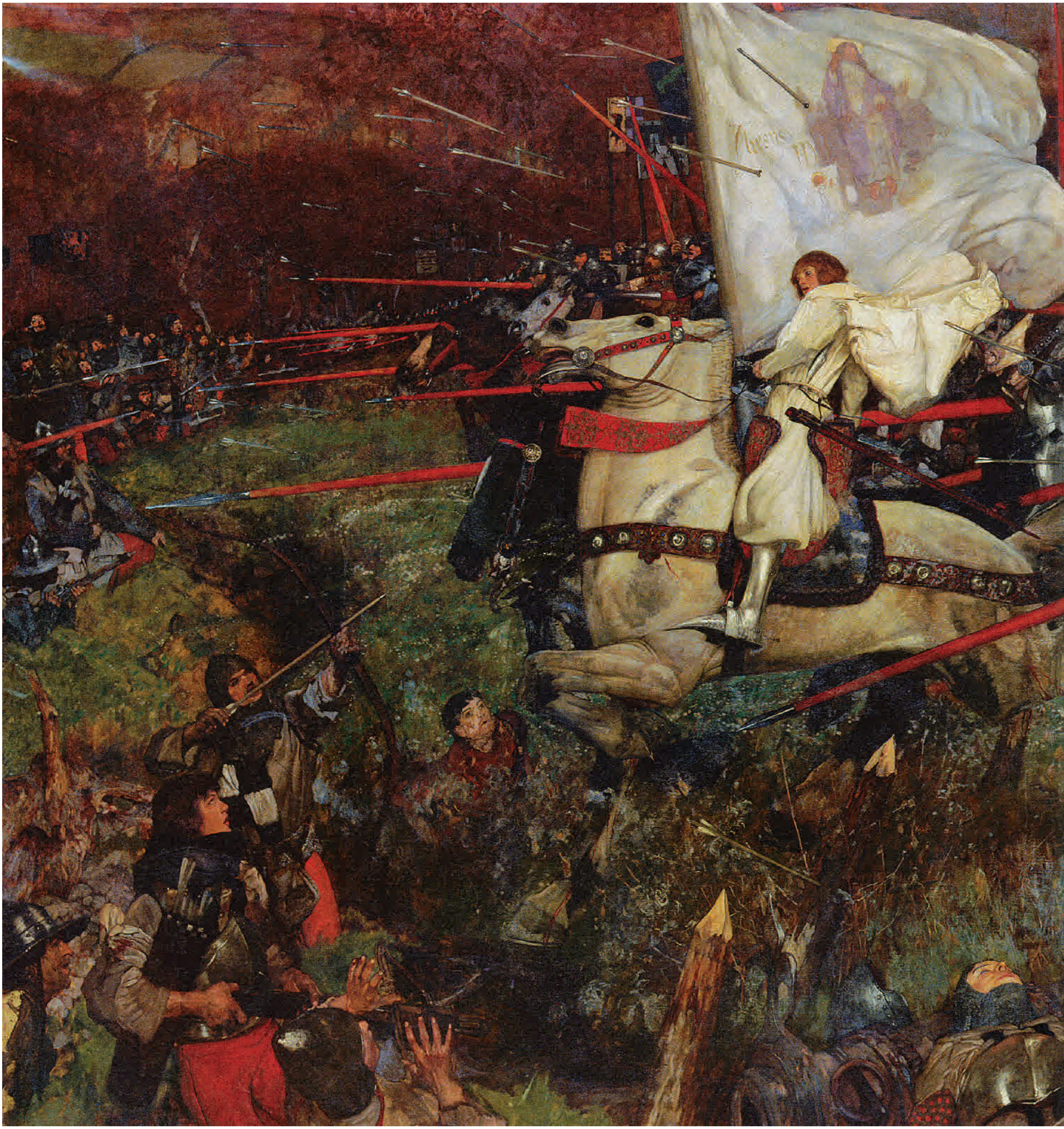
Miniature of a battle between Portuguese and English army and a French vanguard of the King of Castile (detail), 15th century.
From Jean Wavrin’s Collected Chronicles of England. (MS Royal 14 E.IV). Illustration.
The British Library, London.

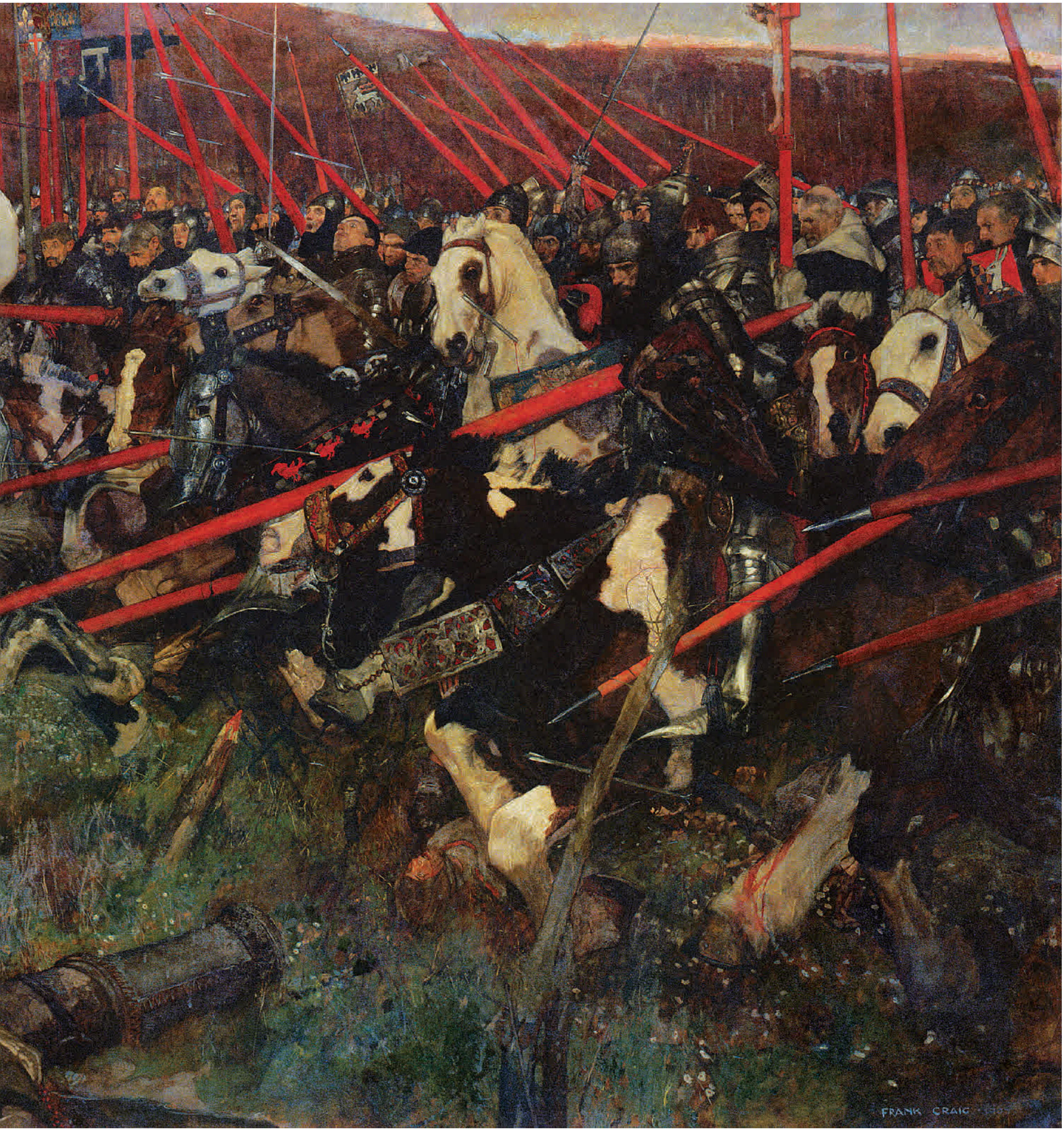


yet not without slaughter and wounds: yea, with the exception also of a great many, both horses and horsemen, who were arrested in their flight by the fires, stakes, and sharp arrows, so that they could not escape far. But the enemy's crossbowmen, who were behind the rear of the armed men and on the flanks, after the first but too hasty discharge, in which they hurt very few, retreated from the fear of our bows. And when the armed men on both sides had nearly approached to one another, the flanks of both armies (viz. ours and the adversaries) emerged into the woods at each side. But when the French nobility, who at first approached in full front, had nearly joined battle, either from fear of the arrows, which by their impetuosity pierced through the sides and beavers of their helmets, or that they might more speedily penetrate our ranks to the standards, then divided themselves into three troops; charging our battle in the three places where the standards were: and intermingling their spears closely, they assaulted our men with so ferocious an impetuosity, that they compelled them to retreat almost at spears' length; our men quickly regaining strength, and making a brave resistance, drove back the enemy, until they recovered the lost ground. Then the battle raged very fiercely, and our archers pierced the flanks with their arrows, and continually renewed the conflict. And when the arrows were exhausted, seizing up axes, poles, swords, and sharp spears, which were lying about, they prostrated, dispersed, and stabbed the enemy. Never had our elders seen the English more daringly, or intrepidly, or voluntarily charge their enemies below with swords, axes, and other weapons."

(adapted from: "The History of the Battle of Agincourt"
by N.H. Nicolas, in: *The Eclectic Review*)

John Gilbert, *Morning of the Battle of Agincourt, 25th October 1415*, 1884.
Oil on canvas, 121.9 x 167.6 cm.
Guildhall Art Gallery, London.

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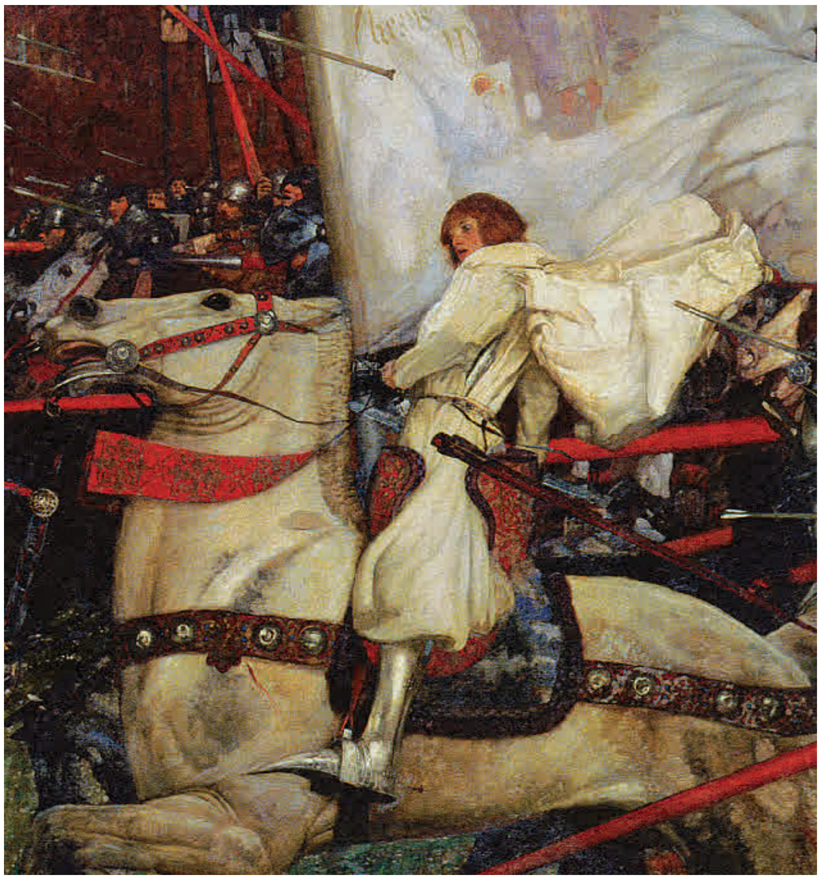
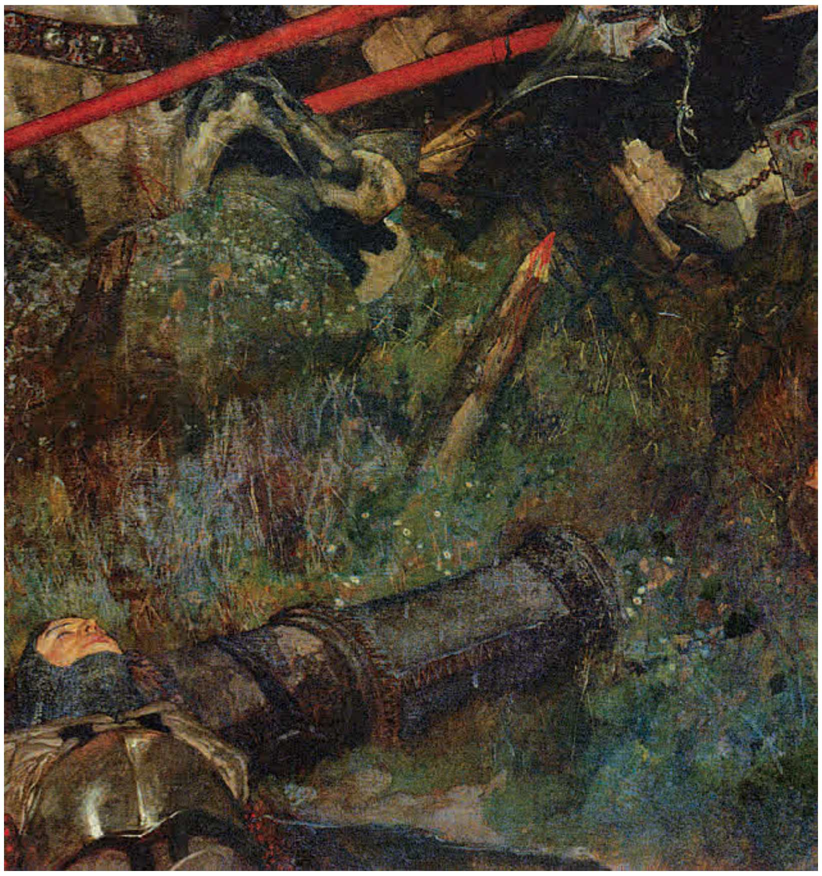


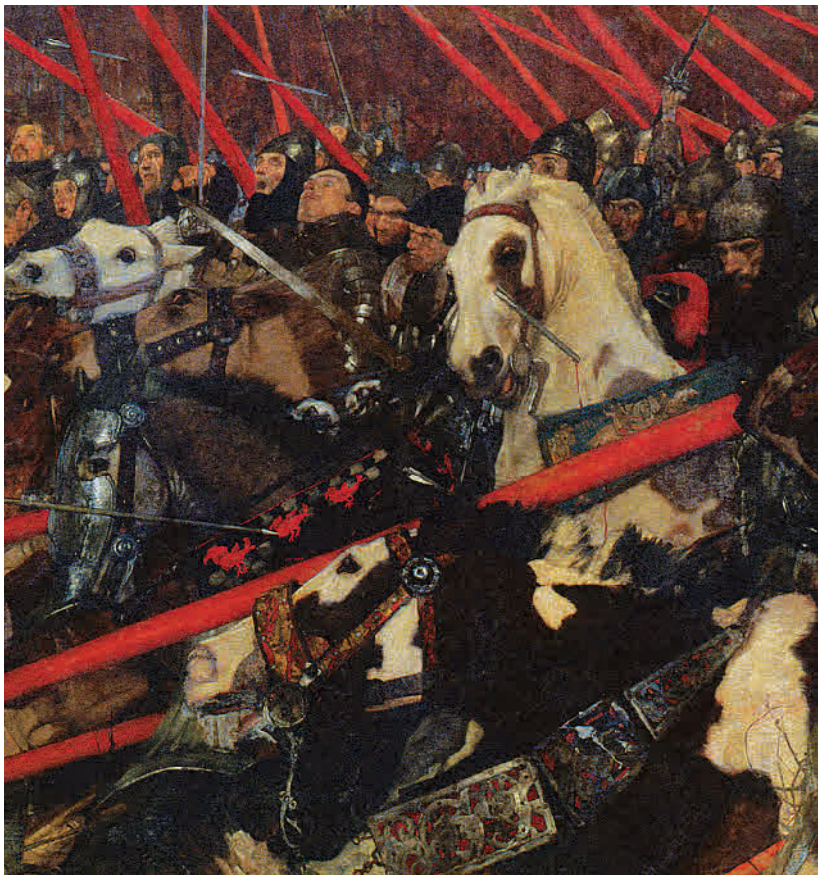
Siege of Orléans

(12 October, 1428 – 8 May, 1429)

The Moral Law causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 1, 5-6)

Thus far, for nearly three centuries, the English had been having an almost uninterrupted success in France, and, vastly disheartened, the French army that had made its way to Orléans now found itself besieged. The advisers of the feeble-minded dauphin [royal title given to the heir of France] induced him to make one supreme effort to save Orléans. There was every reason why he should. The Loire divided France about in half. Everything north and east of it was now held by the English. He and his upholders were confined to the countries below it, and Orléans was the last stronghold left to them. Already the Earl of Salisbury, with a strong force, had crossed the Loire, and soon showed by his advance his project of investing the fortress from the south. He arrived before the town on 12 October 1428, and on 23 October had carried the Tourelles by storm. But in retreating across to the city, the French broke down the arches of the bridge. And now, in good earnest, artillery began to play its part in siege operations. Reinforcements were constantly arriving for both besiegers and besieged. Some 3,000 soldiers were now within the walls holding their own against 23,000. The fortunes of France were at the very lowest ebb. Her men were exhausted and could not save her. But who was to turn the tide, and then pilot the nation back to honour and prosperity? Way over to the northeast, lay a little village called Domremy; and few modern maps give any place to this insignificant hamlet,





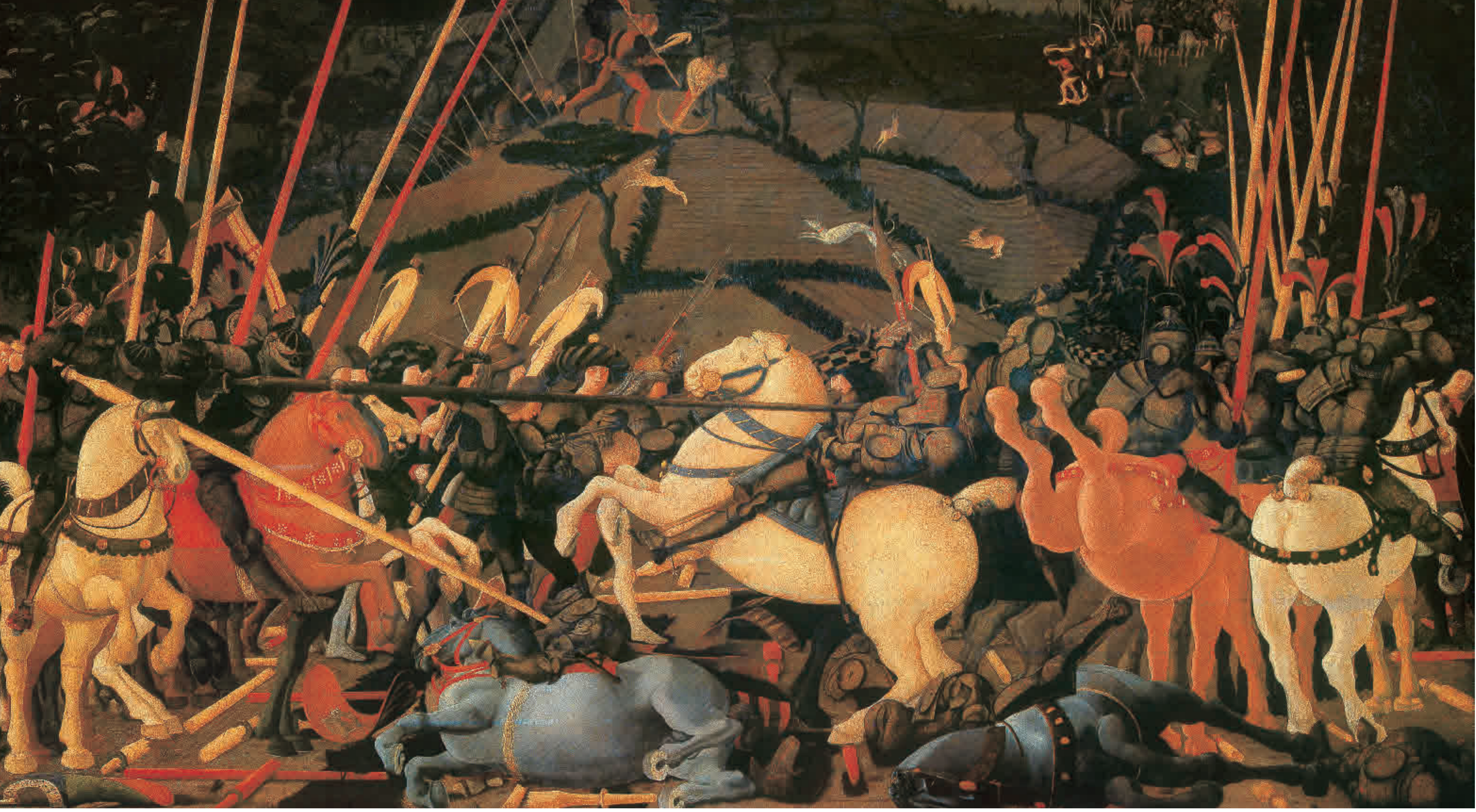
the birthplace and early home of the greatest heroine of military history. The world knows her as Joan of Arc, her parents had named her simply Jeannette. On 25 April the "Maid of Orléans", with her little army and her own brilliant retinue, which the dauphin had insisted upon her having, set out from Blois. On the night of 28 April she was in Orléans, unopposed.

And now came the time for action. The English were astounded at the news of her presence in the city, and for a few days seemed paralyzed. Profiting by their stupor, the Maid sent word to hurry in some needed provision-trains, and they were not even molested by the besiegers. An old prophecy was revived, that a virgin from Lorraine was to save France; and the English were just as superstitious as the French.

There was no more thought of mediation. Bidding her soldiers strike hard and strike home, Joan of Arc gave the word to attack the most available point on the English line of circumvallation. At daybreak on 7 May, a selected body of troops, all of whom had attended mass and confessional and received absolution, were ferried across the Loire to Tourelles, which was held by Gladsdale and the very best and bravest of the English army. Here ensued a terrible battle, both sides fighting with determined valour, the Holy Maid leading on her men and cheering them with her words. The siege of Orléans was raised. After this the cause of England in France went rapidly to pieces. They were whipped on several fields and their hold on all points south of the channel was soon lost to them entirely.

(adapted from: *Famous and decisive battles of the world* by C. King)

Frank Craig, *La Pucelle! Joan of Arc, The Maid of Orleans at the Head of French Cavalry*, 1907.
Oil on canvas, 150 x 341 cm.
Musée d'Orsay, Paris. (pp. 98-99, 100, 101)



Battle of San Romano

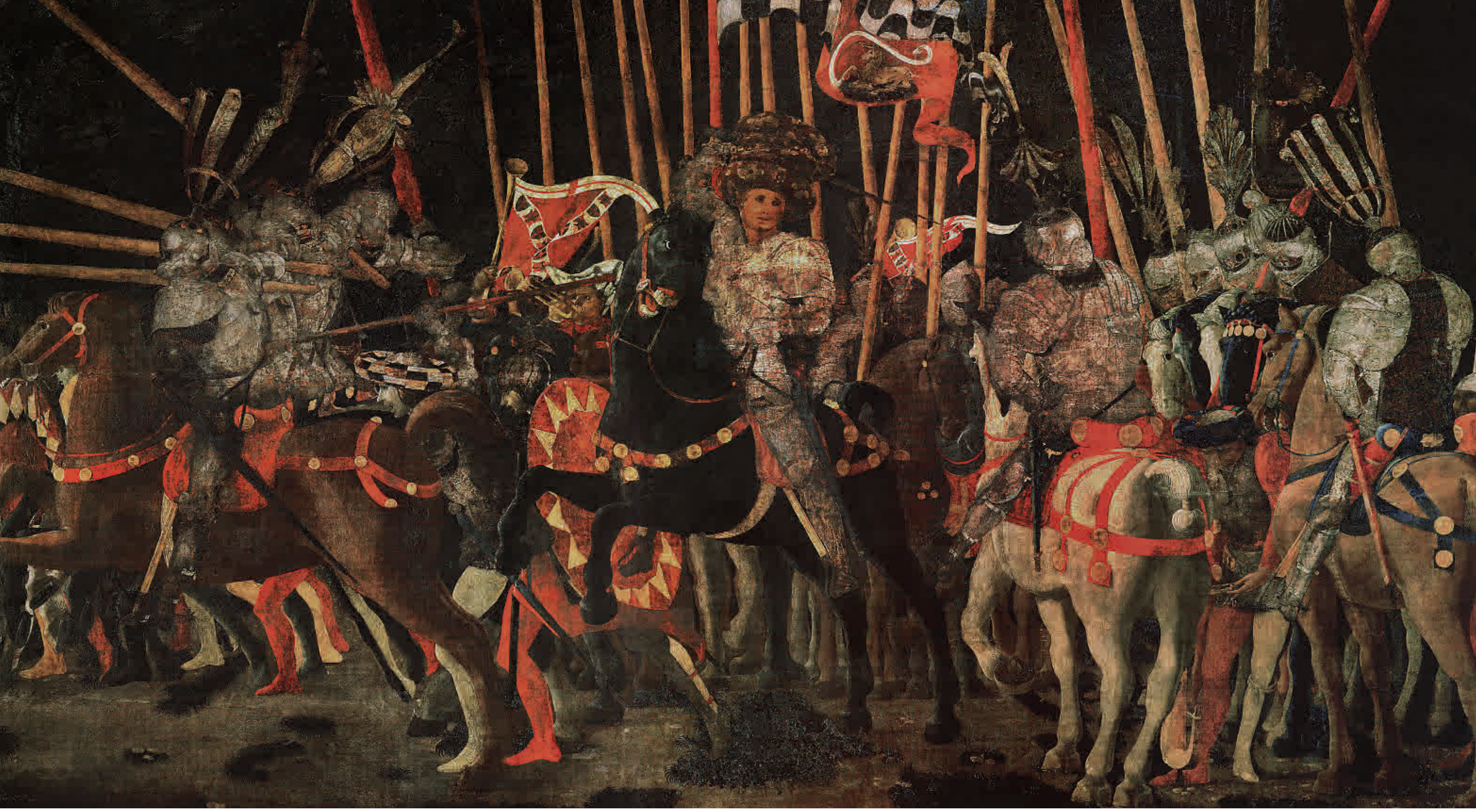
(1 June, 1432)

Men in general judge more from appearances than from reality. All men have eyes, but few have the gift of penetration. (Niccolò Macchiavelli, *Discourses*)

The Battle of San Romano itself was a rather uneventful clash between two Italian city-states, Sienna and Florence, fought by proxy through mercenary armies. The fight lasted several hours, mainly consisting of cavalry engagements, and had no decisive outcome, but in general was thought to have been advantageous to the Florentine troops. The real fame, that this battle enjoys today, comes from a series of panels, painted by Paolo Uccello. Giorgio Vasari, in his biographical work *Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, from Cimabue to Our Times*, described the fervour and obsession which Uccello poured into the production of paintings, especially in the realisation of perspective.

The result of his labour was a brightly coloured series of paintings that, while having war as its main theme, does not create a war-like impression at all. Although the ground is littered with broken lances (forming a grid on which the warriors "dance"), a few fallen horses and even fewer fallen men, the mood of the scene does not convey the rush of battle; neither does it celebrate gallantry or combat. The paintings certainly capture the jostle of the tightly packed armies, with the mass of lances protruding into the sky and the larger-than-life knights on

Paolo Uccello, *Niccolò Mauruzi da Tolentino unseats Bernardino della Ciarda at the Battle of San Romano*, c. 1435-1455. Tempera on wood, 182 x 320 cm.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.



horseback dominating the picture. Nevertheless, the paintings are not at all meant to portray the realistic course of events of the Battle of San Romano. The battle rather serves as subject for the realisation of aesthetic ideas. In short, it is meant to be a thing of beauty. One of those is the depiction of horses; it is peculiar that Uccello paints horses from various angles (although most of them are actually just rearing) and adorns them with decorative, bright harnesses. Here, the artist reveals his main passions: perspective and the painting of animals – which he realises brilliantly; the horses may truly be the only subjects in the painting that are life-like and three-dimensional; they certainly are one of the core elements of the composition, as they dominate the lower half of the painting. Another element is the interplay between the horizontal and vertical pattern that is created by the lances, dominating the upper half of the painting. Finally, the two opposing leaders, each occupying the central space in "their" panels, make up another aesthetic element. Uccello does not seem to have devoted a lot of time to painting their faces; they show only basic human features. Instead he arranges them in dramatic postures: Niccolò da Tolentino (red headwear) motioning his army forward and Francesco Piccinino (black headwear) swinging his sword for a powerful strike. In sum, the whole scene has been carefully composed and idealised to create a purely aesthetic sensation. While the paintings are not meant to realistically document the battle itself, they still are a powerful example for art that has been inspired by conflict.

Paolo Uccello, *The Counterattack of Michelotto da Cotignola at the Battle of San Romano*, c. 1455. Wood panel, 182 × 317 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris

Battle of Anghiari
(29 June, 1440)

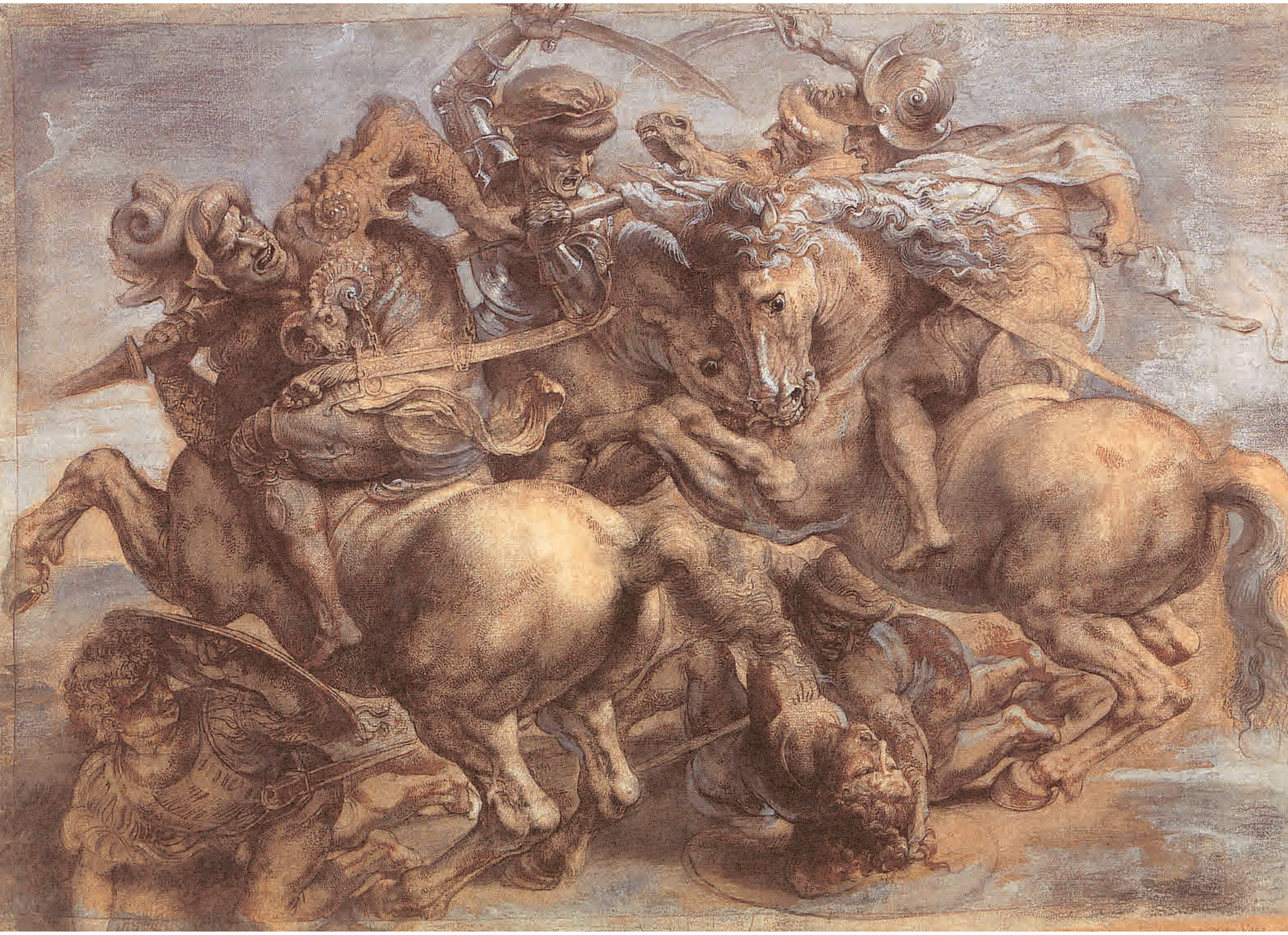
There are not more than five primary colours (blue, yellow, red, white, and black), yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever been seen. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 5, 8)

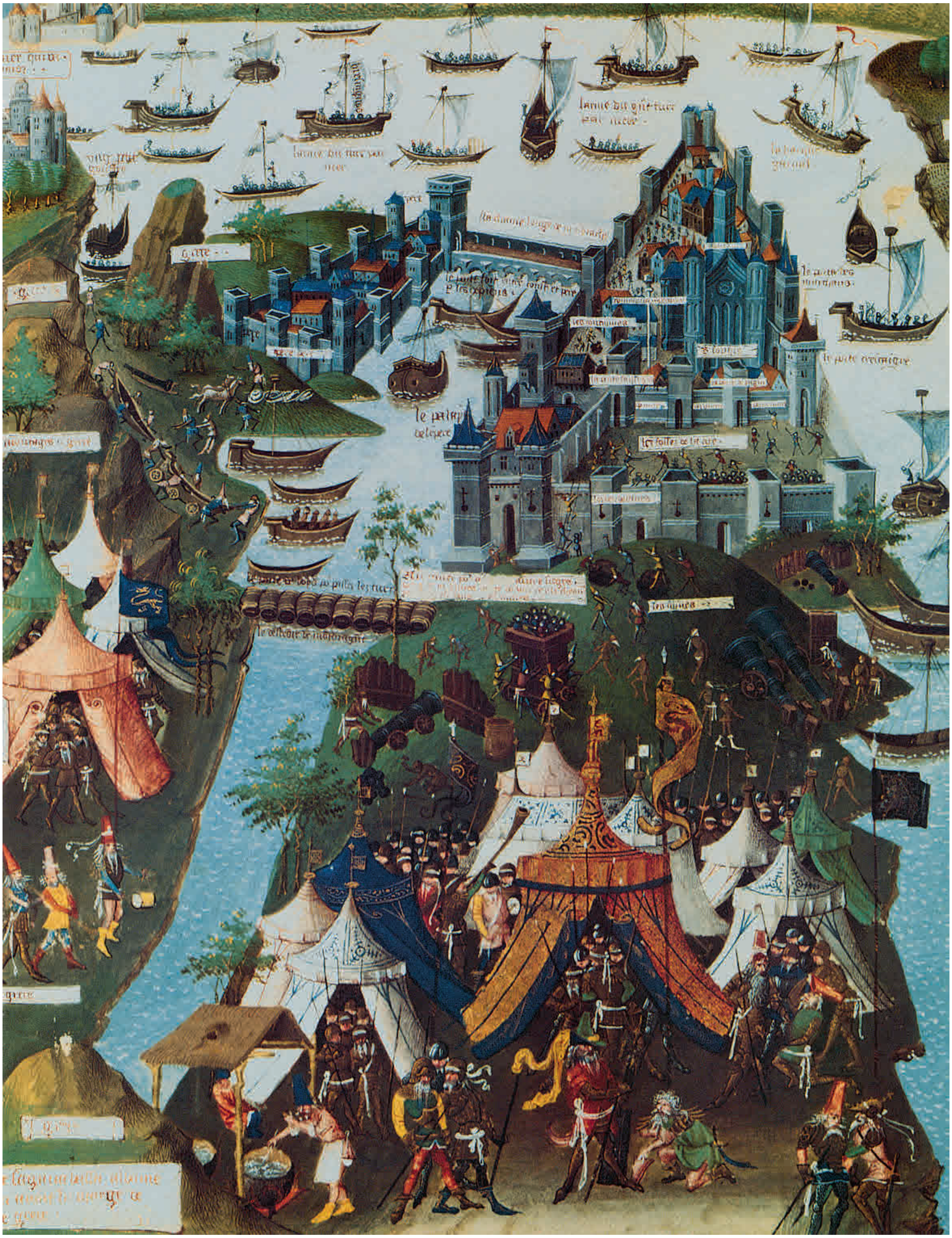
In one of his manuscripts, Leonardo da Vinci has left us a description of the Battle of Anghiari, as he had read it in some chronicle, or, perhaps as he had gathered it from the lips of one of the last survivors of the famous struggle. Micheletto Attendolo with his army following him, climbed up a mountain to examine the country; He perceived Niccolò Piccinino, coming with his troops from Borgo San Sepolcro; having seen him, he returned to the camp and addressed his own men. When he had finished his speech, he put his hands together and prayed; and immediately St Peter was seen to appear out of a cloud and speak to the Patriarch, who sent five hundred horsemen to break or check the enemy's onslaught. Francesco, son of Niccolò Piccinino, came first to attack the bridge held by the Patriarch and the Florentines. Round this bridge a great struggle was waged. The Florentines won, and the enemy was driven back. Then it was that Guidone, and his brother Astorre, Lord of Faenza, with a great following, formed in array again, and recommenced the fight, pressing the Florentines so vigorously that they took the bridge, and got as far as the tents. But Simonetto, with six hundred cavalry, fell on the enemy, drove them out of the position again, and recovered the bridge. Thus for a long time the struggle went on with changing results. At last the Patriarch, to carry confusion into the enemy's ranks, sent Niccolò da Pisa.

The battlefield must be strewn, with arms of every kind. Amongst the dead, some must be half hidden under dust and broken weapons, others again quite covered and half-buried; some dying men must be shown grinding their teeth, rolling their eyes, clenching their fists, and in various contortions of the body, legs and arms. One supposed to have been overthrown and disarmed might defend himself still, with teeth and nails. There might also be a group of men lying heaped under a dead horse. There will be the squadrons coming up to render aid, full of hope mingled with caution, with eyebrows raised, and shading their eyes with their hands, so as to discern the enemy in the fray or athwart the dust, and attentively obey their captain's orders; and the captain himself, baton in hand, galloping and pointing to the spot to be reached. Nothing must appear all over the field, but what is full of blood and horrid carnage. Leonardo should have treated the scene in an essentially realistic fashion: topography, strategic movements, correctness of costume, in a word, local colour, should have taken the foremost place in his conception. However, nobody who understood the artist's profoundly idealistic nature would attribute such a plan to him! He was willing enough to make the most minute investigations before he began his labour, but the moment his brush was in his fingers he must have recovered all his liberty of action. The preliminary research, of which scarce a trace is discernible in his ultimate production, had only one value in his eyes – that of preventing his imagination from going astray; it provided him, in certain sense, with ballast. And all that time his idea took stronger hold on his mind, threw out deeper roots, ripened yet more and more.

(adapted from: *Leonardo da Vinci: Artist, Thinker, and Man of Science* by E. Müntz)

Peter Paul Rubens after a design by **Leonardo da Vinci**,
The Battle of Anghiari, 16th/17th century.
Pen, brush and gouache, 45.3 x 63.6 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.





Siege and Fall of Constantinople

(6 April – 29 May, 1453)

Rapidity is the essence of war: take advantage of the enemy's unreadiness, make your way by unexpected routes, and attack unguarded spots. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 19)

The enemy appeared at their gates: during the eight hundred years that Mahometanism had progressed, the city had often been threatened, and in vain; but the harvest was now ripe, the time was come, and the sickle, in the hands of Mahomet II. Five or six thousand men, taken from the very dregs of the people, composed the national force, which was augmented by a few European troops, under Justinian, a Genoese. These were the only resources of a city inhabited by men incapable of defending themselves, and who trusted entirely to a few mercenary strangers, who still deigned to protect them.

Pateologus and his courtiers favoured, at least in appearance, the union of the two churches of the East and West. The Holy Father promised to send some galleys and troops. Cardinal Isidore came to Constantinople as legate from the Holy See. He celebrated divine service in the church of St Sophia. This threw the whole city into a state of alarm. The people flocked in crowds to the retreat of the monk Gennadius, to consult with him what was to be done. He announced the greatest misfortunes to those who should adopt the *impious* reconciliation of the Greeks with the Latins. Communication with the Latins ceased: they would prefer, they said, to see the turban of Mahomet displayed, to the appearance of the Roman purple, or the cardinal's hat.

But now the sultan, having employed two years in preparations, marched toward Constantinople at the head of an army of 400,000 men. While Mahomet was investing Constantinople by land, his fleet, consisting of 250 vessels, advanced to the Dardanelles. Enormous iron chains barred the entrance of the Turkish ships. It is affirmed that Mahomet, to surmount this obstacle, had recourse to an expedient till that time unheard of: he transported by land eighty galleys in the course of one night, and at daybreak launched them into the interior of the basin of the port.

The Greeks, fully occupied in guarding their ramparts, had no suspicion of the design of the enemy until at dawn they beheld the Muslim standards flying in their port.

The Turks, masters of the port, established batteries on the side next the sea, while the army pressed the city on the land side. The sultan commenced the attack about three o'clock in the morning, by sending to the assault 30,000 of his worst troops, in order to fatigue the besieged. Thirty janizaries at length succeeded in mounting the walls, and killed and overthrew all who came in their way. In an instant the air resounded with cries of victory: the Turks had penetrated to the port, while other Turks hewed an opening, with their axes, at several of the city gates, through which the rest of the army poured in crowds.

Constantine, accompanied by a few of his guards and some faithful servants, threw himself, sword in hand, into the thickest of the Ottoman battalions. He continued fighting bravely, when a Turk cut off the half of his face. With him fell the empire of the East, which had existed eleven hundred and forty-three years. One Constantine had founded it: another of the same name, not less brave but less fortunate, saw it perish.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

The Siege of Constantinople, 1455.
Illumination from Bertrandon de la Broquière's *Voyages d'Outremer* (MS FR 9087). Illumination.
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Battle of Castillon

(17 July, 1453)

Sun Tzu said: In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign, collects his army and concentrates his forces. When in difficult country, do not encamp. In country where high roads intersect, join hands with your allies. Do not linger in dangerously isolated positions. In hemmed-in situations, you must resort to stratagem. In desperate position, you must fight. [Sun Tzu, Ch. 8, 1-2)

This siege was the scene of the "last fight" of one of the bravest and most esteemed heroes that do honour to English annals. The army of Charles VII of France, on 13 July, 1452, laid siege to Castillon, a little city of Perigord, on the Dordogne, ten leagues from Bordeaux, then in the occupation of the English. Marshals Lohéac and Jalognes had the conducting of it; Jean Bureau, grand master of the artillery, commanded 700 cannoneers. The place, surrounded by lines of circumvallation and an entrenched camp, was brought to bay, when the brave English general John Talbot (Earl of Shrewsbury), came to its aid. He at once put to flight a body of free archers. Seduced by this easy success, he marched straight to the entrenchments of the French camp. Its fortifications astonished him, without abating his courage: he gave the assault. During two hours, he braved all the efforts and the murderous fire of the French – at eighty years of age, he fought with the ardour of youth: the English gave way; twice he brought them back to the charge, and twice he was driven back; and the French, falling upon the rear guard of the English with the utmost fury, overwhelmed it.

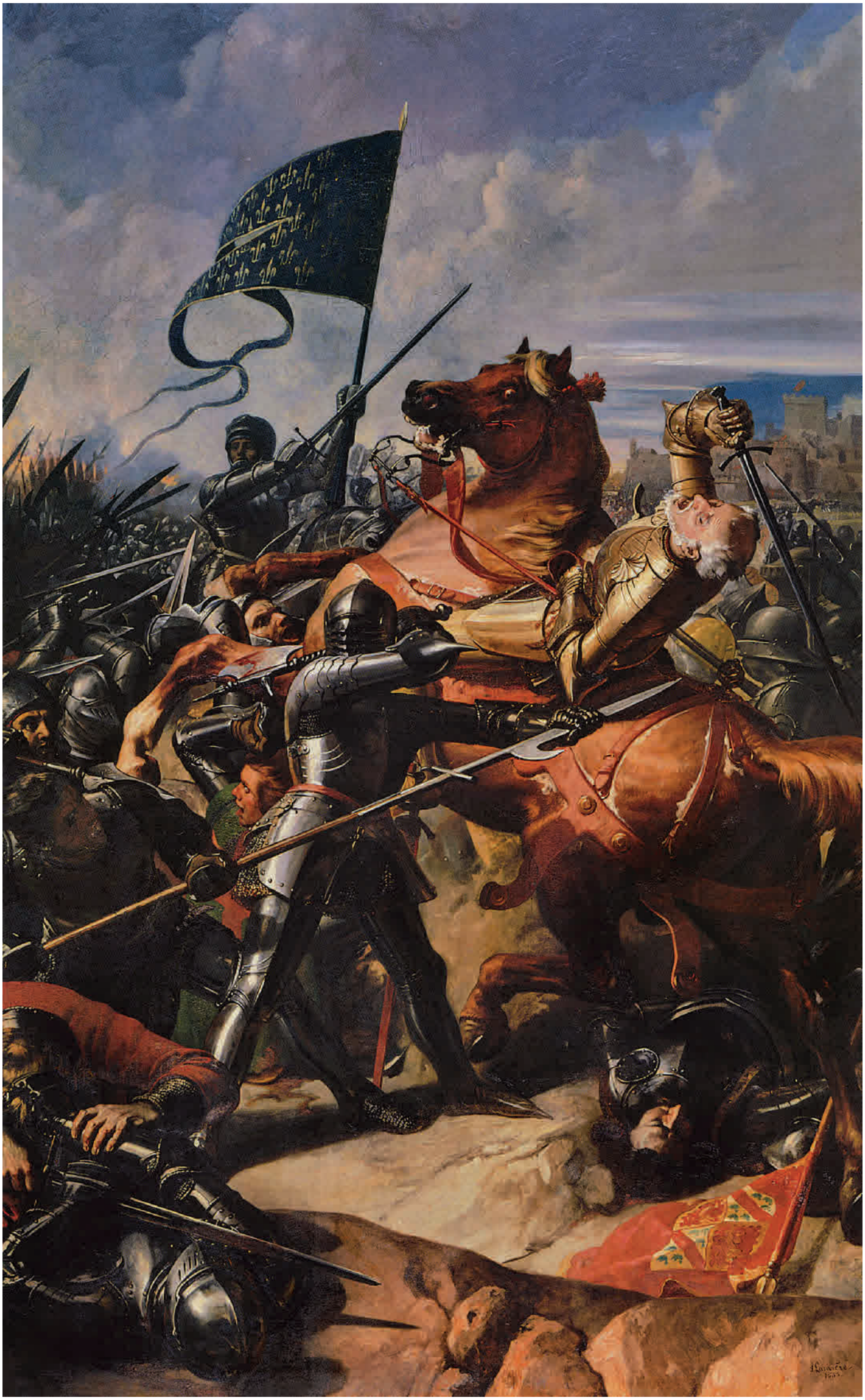
In vain Talbot, sword in hand, covered with blood and dust, rode through the ranks, animating his men by his words and his example. His war-horse, struck down by a culverin, encumbered him in his fall, he was on the point of expiring, when his son flew to his assistance. "Retire!" cried the generous old man, "reserve your young days for a more useful occasion. I die fighting for my country; live, my son, to serve it."

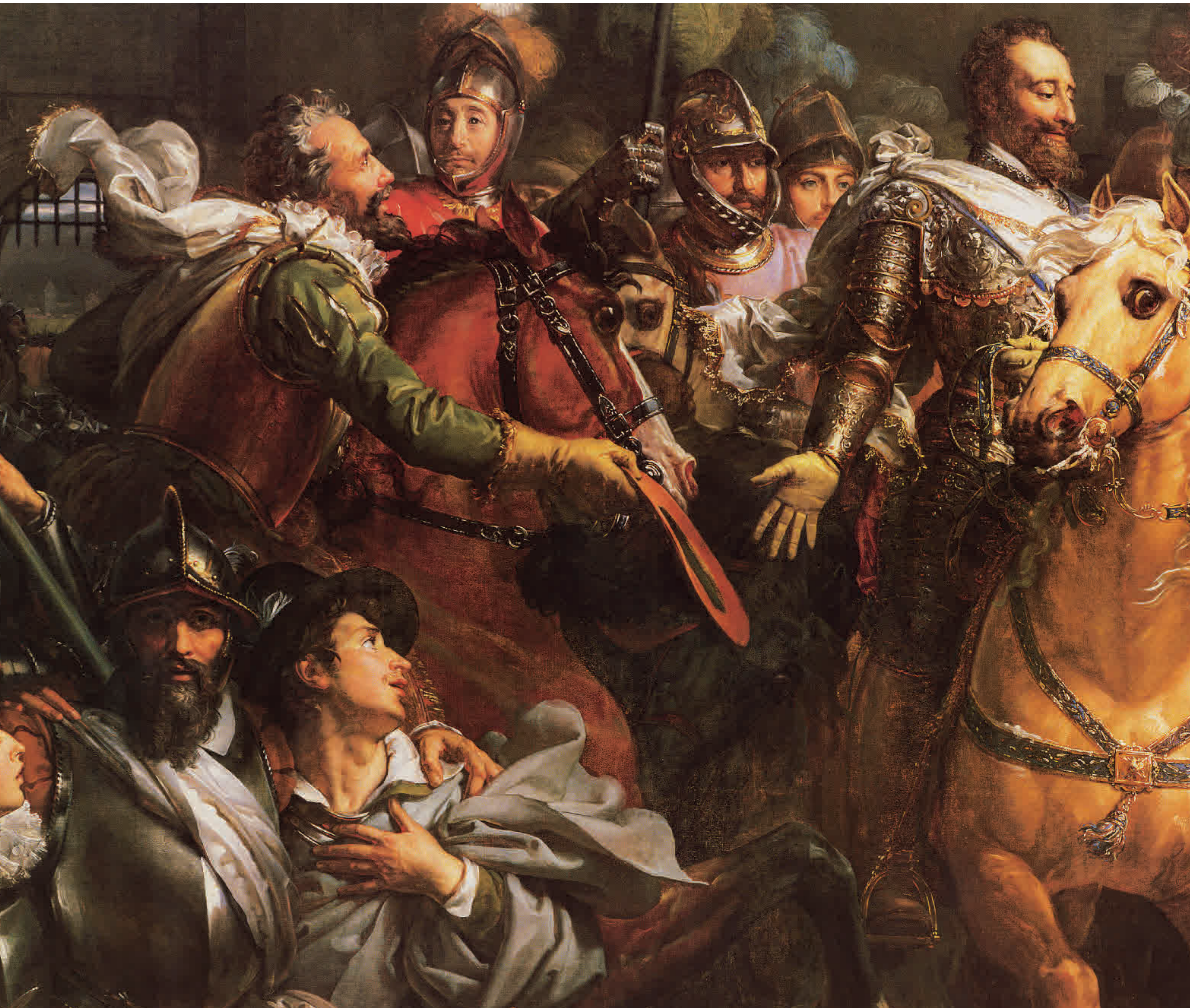
After uttering these words, he expired. His son, the young Lord Lisle, fell a few minutes after, while endeavouring to avenge his death. The English fled; and Castillon surrendered the next day. "Thus perished Talbot," writes a French historian, "whom the English of that day called their Achilles. He had, it is true, the valour of one: he was not only brave, but an excellent negotiator, a faithful subject, a sincere friend, and a generous enemy." This defeat put an end to the English dominion in France.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

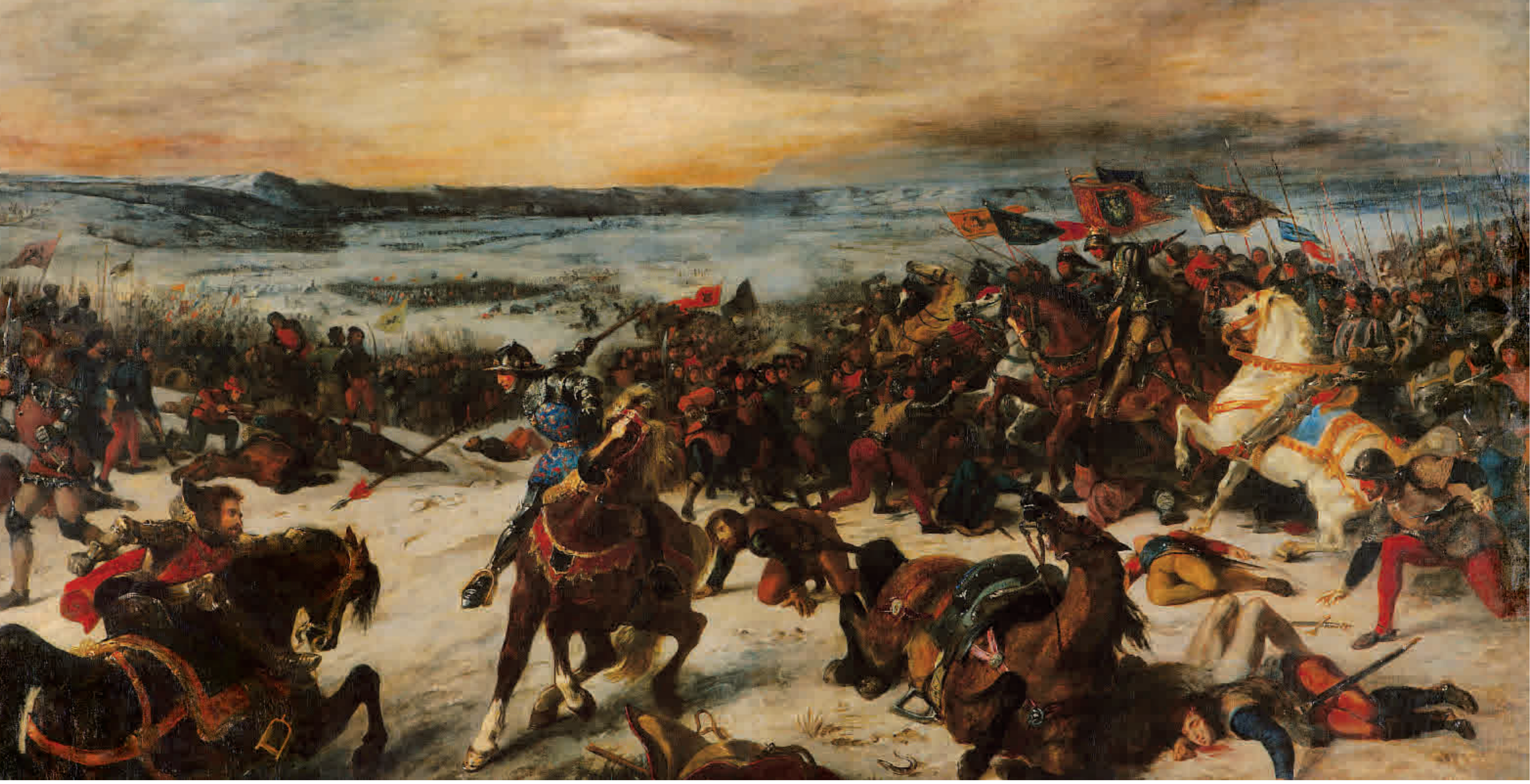
The painting shows a crucial moment in battle, as Talbot's horse is struck by a cannonball and is about to throw off and crush its rider. Two factual errors in this painting are the colour of the horse, which was reportedly white, and Talbot wearing armour. Since he had been wounded in a previous battle and was not directly engaging the French army, hit was unlikely that he wore plate armour, as shown in the painting.

Charles Philippe Larivière, *Battle of Castillon, 17th July 1453*, 1839.
Oil on canvas, 425 x 260 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.





Early Modern Age to Wars for European Dominance



Battle of Nancy

(5 January, 1477)

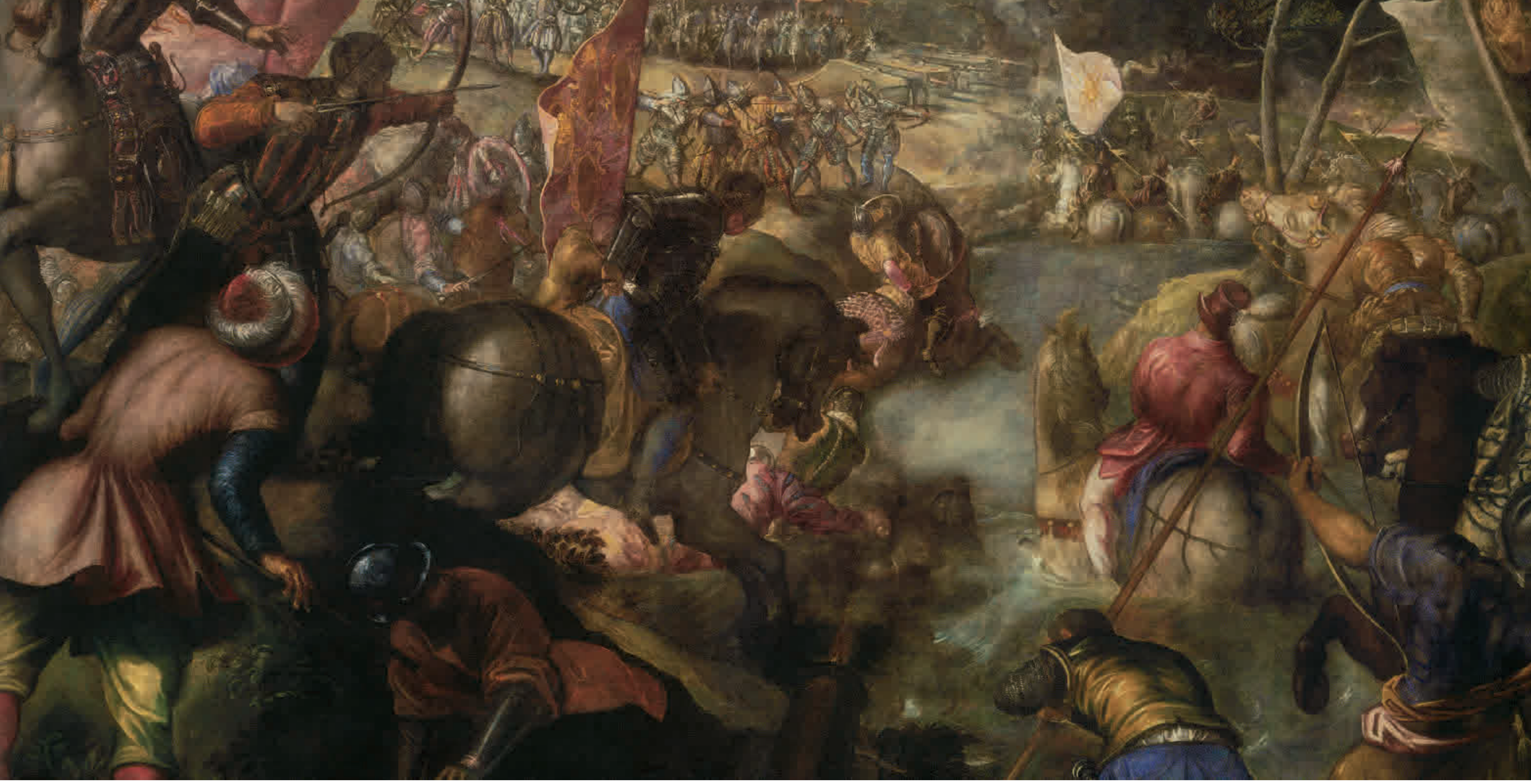
The onset of troops is like the rush of a torrent which will even roll stones along in its course. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 5, 12)

In 1475, Nancy was besieged and taken by Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. On 6 October, 1476, Nancy surrendered to the army of the Duke of Lorraine, and Charles at the first information of this event, marched to take the city from its new captors. The Count of Campo-Basso was entrusted with the first attack; but this officer proved a traitor, and protracted the siege, so that René II, the Duke of Lorraine, had time to come up with 20,000 French troops. On the approach of this army the count deserted, leaving Charles an army of only 4,000 men. On 5 or 6 January, 1477, (historians differ as to the day) the two armies met; the shock was terrible; the wing of the Burgundian army was pierced, and the French attacked the centre with the utmost impetuosity. As Charles was fastening on his helmet, the golden lion which served as a crest, dropped to the ground, and in surprise he exclaimed: "Ecce magnum Signum Dei!" The Burgundians soon fell back in disorder before the repeated and furious attacks of the enemy, and Charles was carried along with the fugitives until his horse fell, and he was precipitated into a ditch, where he was slain by the thrust of a lance. His head, covered with blood and filth, was not found until the second day after the battle. It was so much disfigured, that it was not recognised. The body at length, however, was recognised by the scar of a sword-cut which he had received in another battle.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

François Gérard, *The Entry of Henri IV into Paris on 22nd March 1594* (detail), c. 1816.
Oil on canvas, 61 x 134 cm. Private collection. (pp. 110-111)

Eugène Delacroix, *The Death of Charles the Bold at the Battle of Nancy*, 1831.
Oil on canvas, 237 x 356 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nancy.



Battle of Fornovo

(6 July, 1495)

The principle on which to manage an army is to set up one standard of courage which all must reach. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 32)

You must know that the king had placed his greatest strength in his van; for in it there were about 350 men-at-arms, 300 Swiss, 300 archers, and some of the 200 mounted cross-bow men of his own guard.

Our vanguard had by this time marched on as far as the enemy's camp, but our two other bodies were neither so near each other, nor so well ordered as on the day before; and because the Marquis of Mantua was within a quarter of a league of our rear ready to attack them, but marching slowly on, and in such close order, that it was a very fine sight to behold, the king was forced to turn his back upon his own vanguard, and face about to his enemies at the rear.

I had not come a hundred paces, when I heard a great noise: it was the Estradiots, who were gotten into the king's quarters and they rifled his baggage, and killed or wounded four or five men, but the rest escaped. I heard Matthew the bastard of Bourbon call to the king, and say, "On, sir, on;" upon which he went to the head of the army, and placed himself directly before his standard, so that there was not a man that I saw nearer the enemy. About a quarter of an hour after my arrival, the enemy, being advanced so near the king, began to couch their lances; our men advanced towards them. You must know that that brigade which charged the king was warmly pursued; the bastard of Bourbon was taken prisoner and carried off to their camp.

(adapted from: *Memoirs of Philip de Commines* edited by A.R. Scoble)

Tintoretto (**Jacopo Robusti**), *Battle of Fornovo*, 1578-1579.
Oil on canvas, 269.5 x 422 cm.
Bavarian State Painting Collections, Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

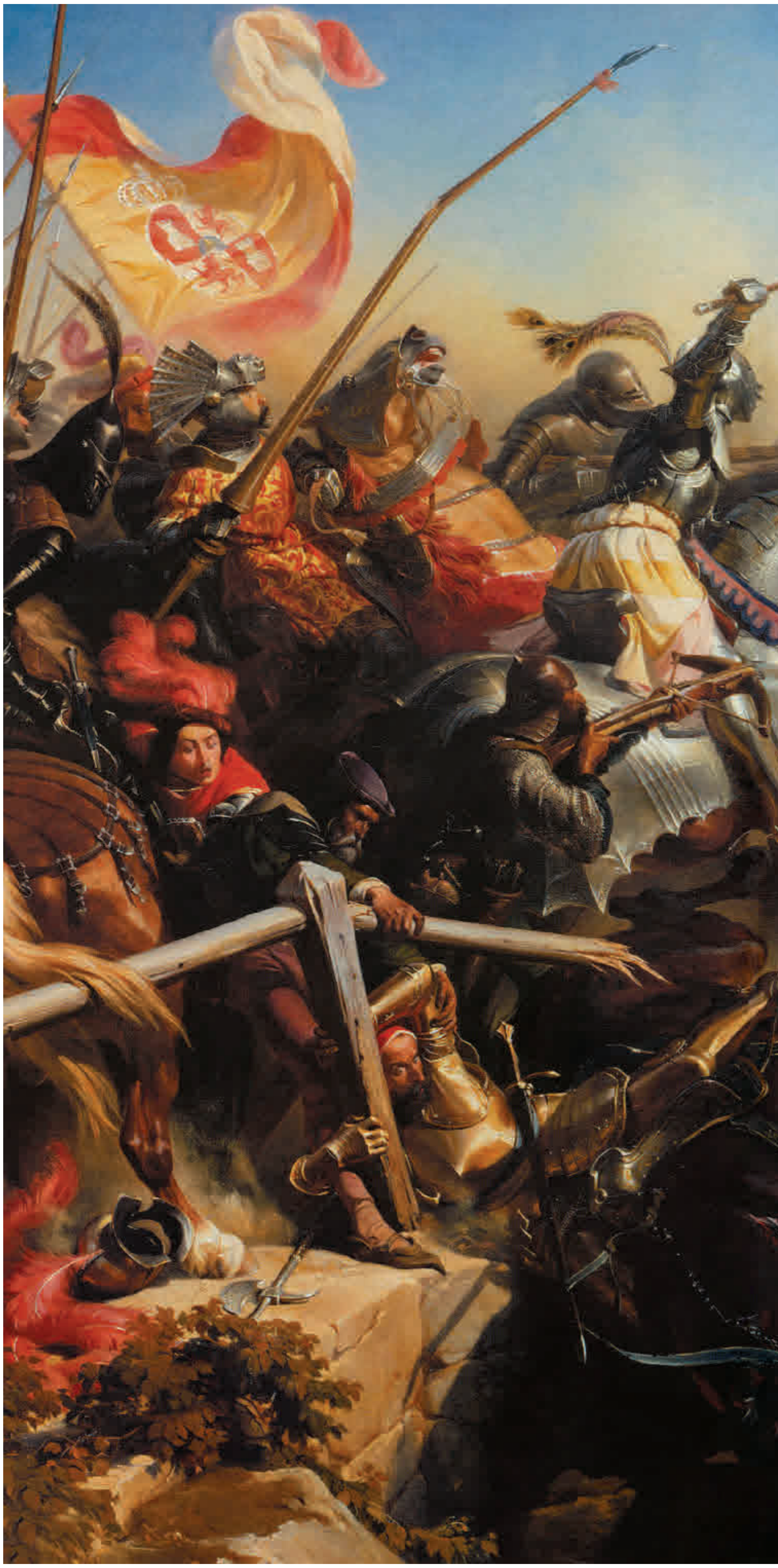
Battle of Garigliano

(29 December, 1503)

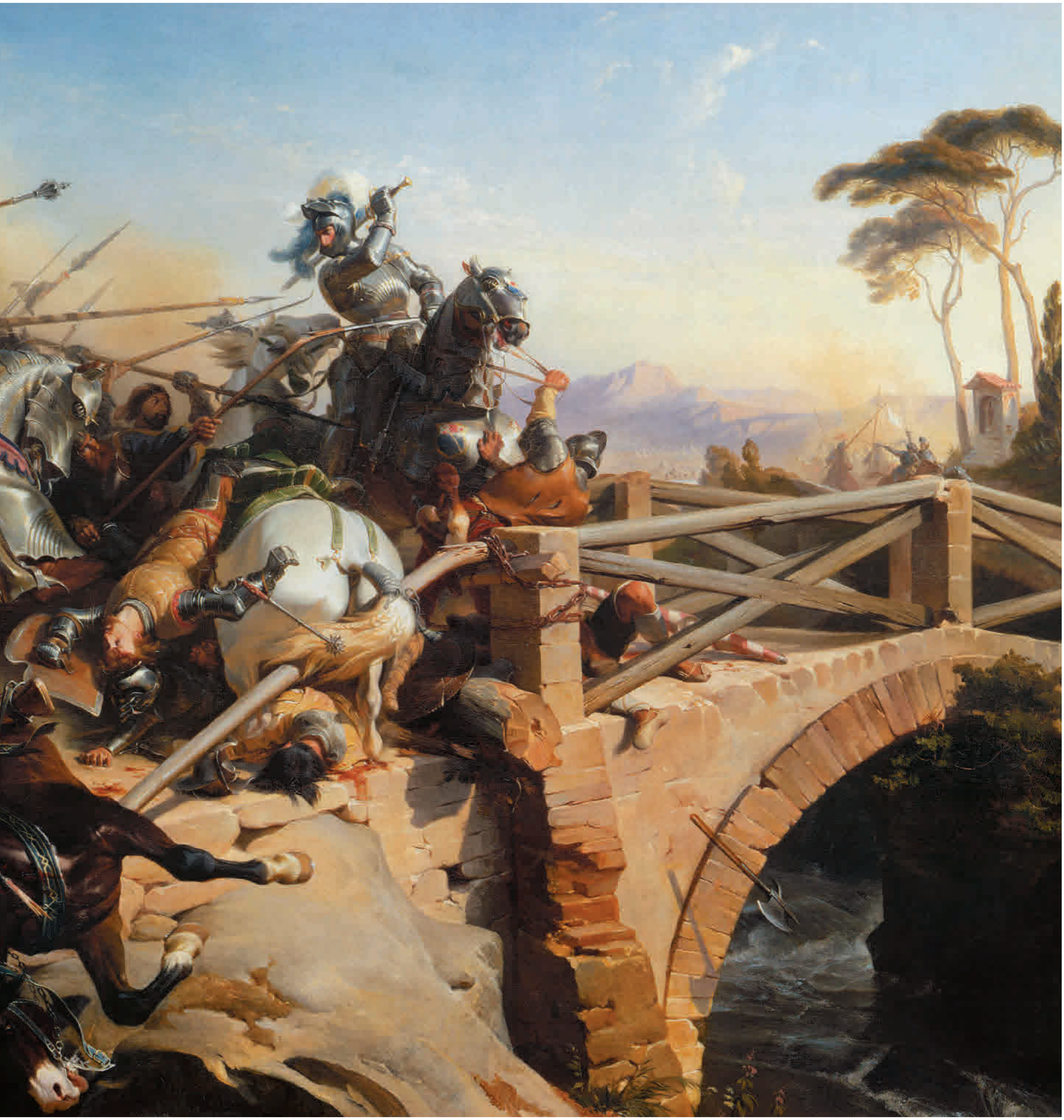
The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 8, 11)

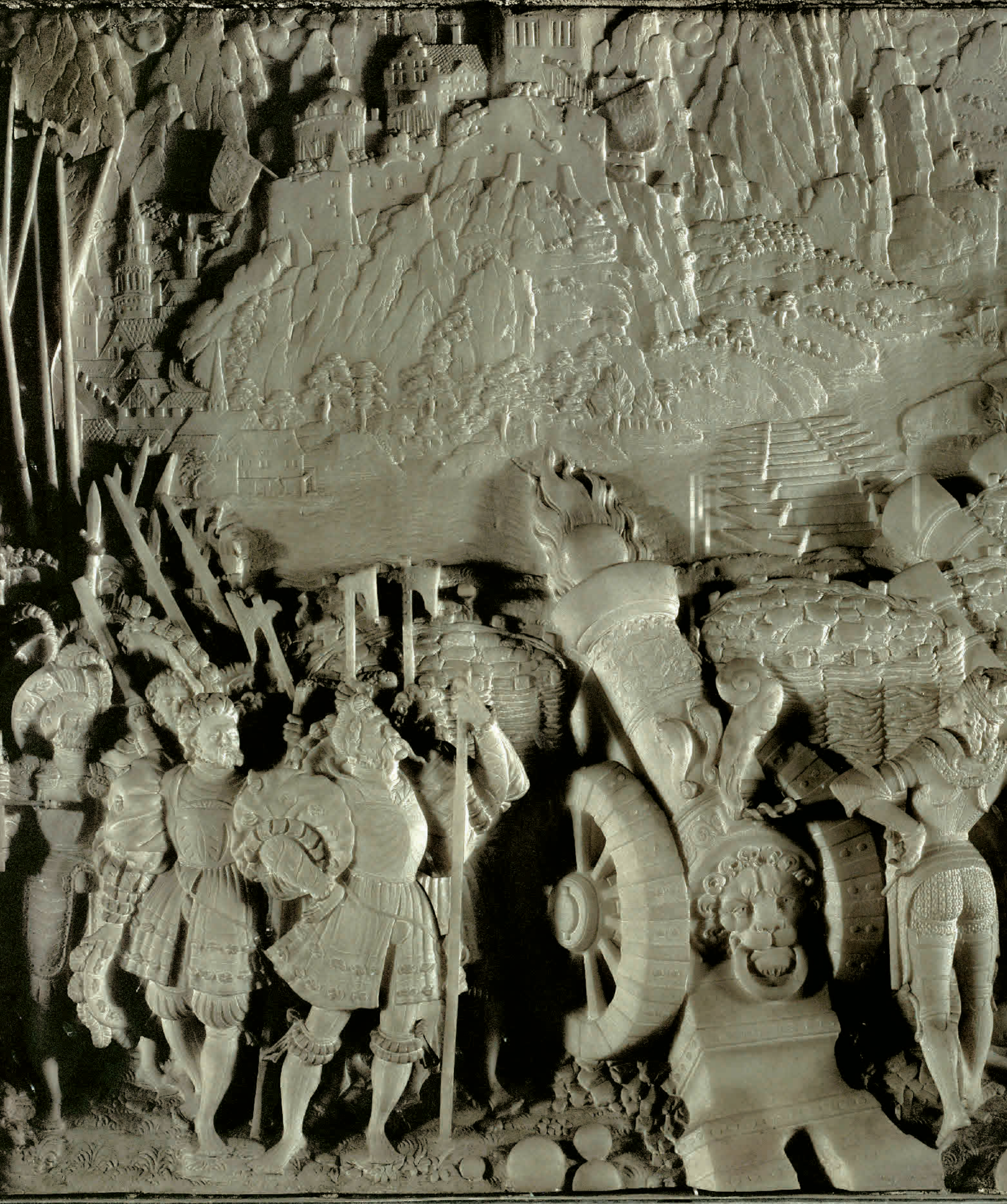
Foiled in the attempt to carry the bridge, of which the French had possession, and despairing to cross the ford, which was equally difficult and guarded by their whole army, General Gonsalvo de Cordoba (el Gran Capitán), with great secrecy, proceeded to the construction of a bridge a few miles above, at Suio. To pass this bridge secretly with a large body of his forces, while the rest of his army should assail them on the front, was the well-conceived project of the Spanish captain. He crossed the Garigliano, accordingly, on the night of 28 December, 1503, the French totally unsuspecting danger from this quarter. This strange neglect of some of the first principles of warfare will suffice to show how miserably they still were commanded. On the following morning the French were attacked by the enemy in front, led by Bartolomeo d'Alviano. The engagement that followed was a terrible one. The French fought with great bravery, and their artillery did immense execution upon the Spanish columns but, in the midst of the conflict, they were suddenly assailed from behind by the fresh army under Gonsalvo. The surprise was complete, a panic followed, and the day was lost. The French fled, at first, in confusion, but their order was soon recovered by the great efforts of their men-at-arms. These kept the rear, turning occasionally to the encounter with their assailants, whenever their pressure furnished the provocation, or whenever the ground gave them an opportunity to fight with advantage. The French lost their baggage, their artillery, and eight thousand men.

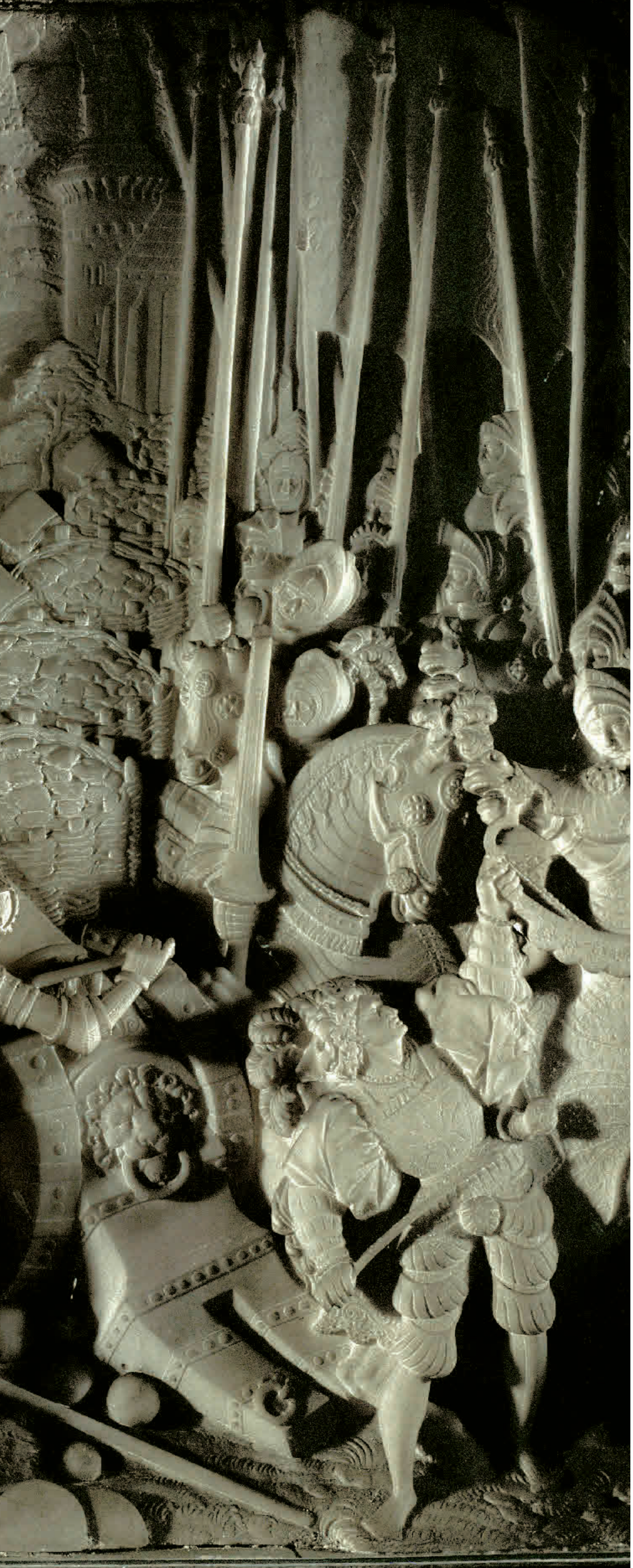
(adapted from: *The Life of Chevalier Bayard*
by William Gilmore Simms)



Félix Philippoteaux, *Bayard Defends the Bridge of Garigliano*, 1836. Oil on canvas, 111 x 136 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.







Siege of Kufstein

(October, 1504)

Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength; attacking, a superabundance of strength. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 4, 6)

On 1 October, Maximilian's army had arrived at Kufstein, the key to the Innthal, and made camp at Zell. When he arrived on 3 October, the king ordered the construction of artillery emplacements on a hill nearby Zell and the bombardment of city and fortress with the seven available culverins. The impact was so insignificant that the steward of the fortress, Hans Pienzenau, had the areas where the cannonballs had hit, swept with brooms. When the king saw this, he said: "Now will you look at that! By god that is brazen." The king demanded that the city surrender to him. On 12 October the city opened its gates to the king, despite Pienzenau's threat to throw anyone into the river who would dare to talk of capitulation. A detachment of Bohemian troops left the city while the rest retreated into the castle. A war council decided to negotiate a truce of three days. During that time heavy artillery would be transported on the Inn river to Kufstein; they were immensively heavy and had be transported by boat. Maximilian aligned the cannons personally. The projectiles were hurled with such a force that they not only crashed through the wall but also went three metres deep into the rock. The fortress endured three days of vehement bombardment until the walls threatened to come crushing down. On 17 October, at noon, the assault on the castle began. The defenders did not expect the attack and attempted another excursion; they were, however, overpowered by the superior numbers of the assaulters.

(adapted from: *Kriegsgeschichte und Kriegswesen*
by J. Würdinger; transl.)

Hieronymus Longi, *The Siege of Kufstein*, detail from
the cenotaph of Emperor Maximilian I, 1572.
Marble. Hofkirche, Innsbruck.

Battle of Marignano

(13-14 September, 1515)

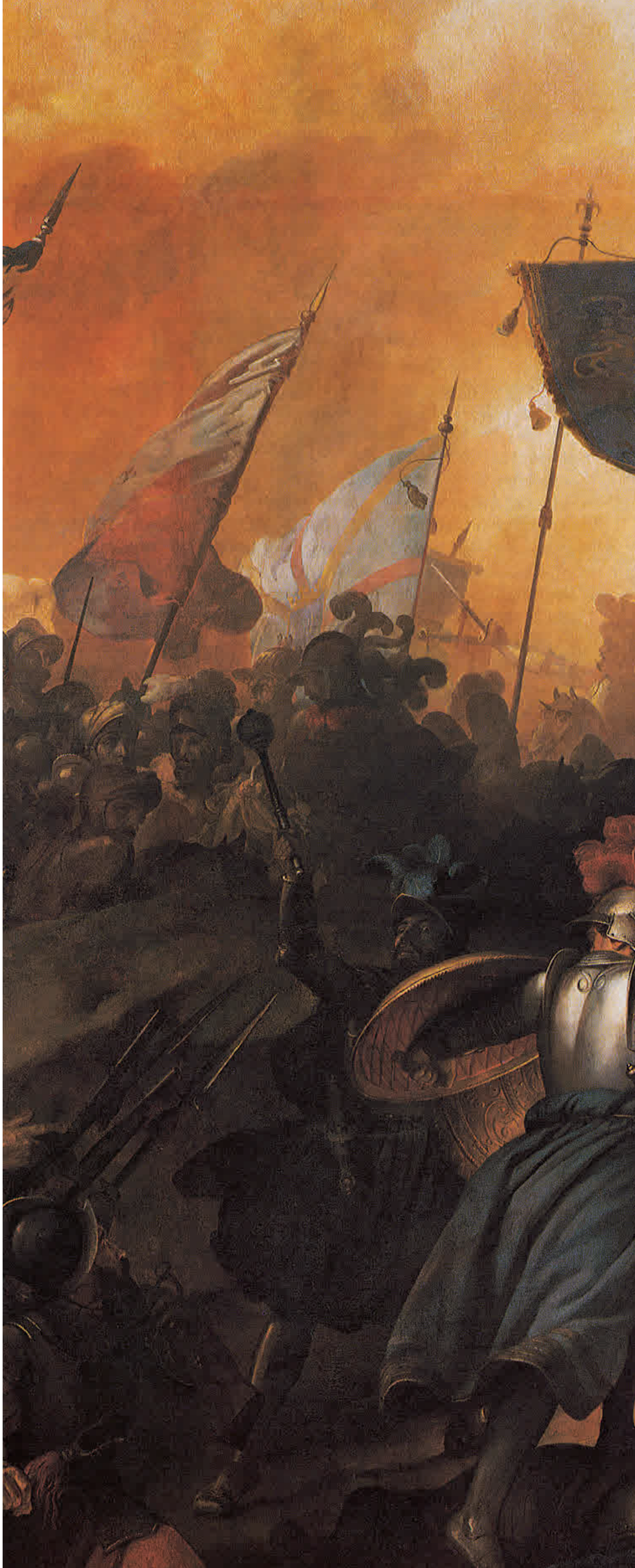
The consummate leader cultivates the moral law, and strictly adheres to method and discipline; thus it is in his power to control success. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 4, 16).

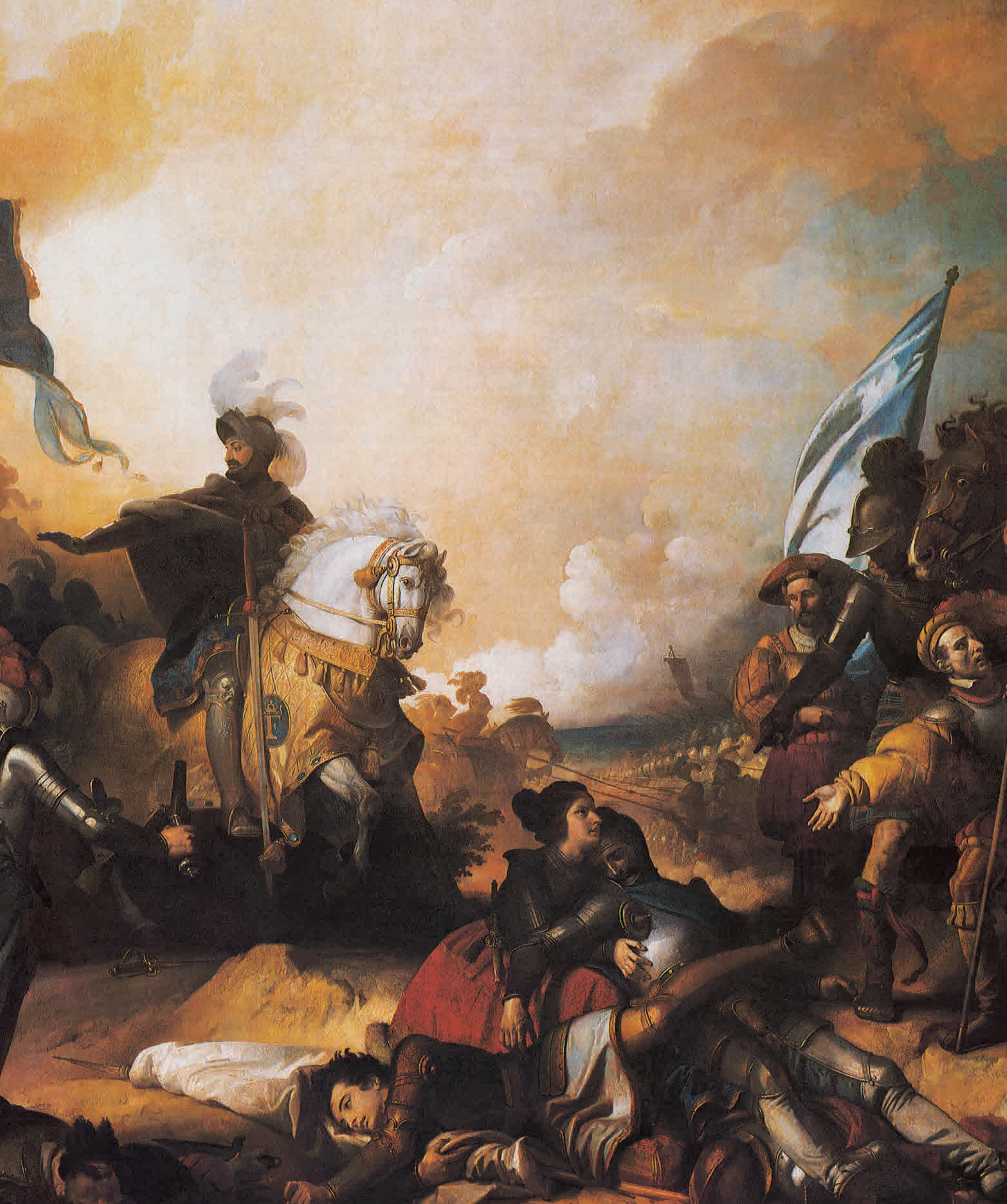
The Battle of Marignano was fought near Milan in Italy, between the Swiss army, and the French under Francis I.

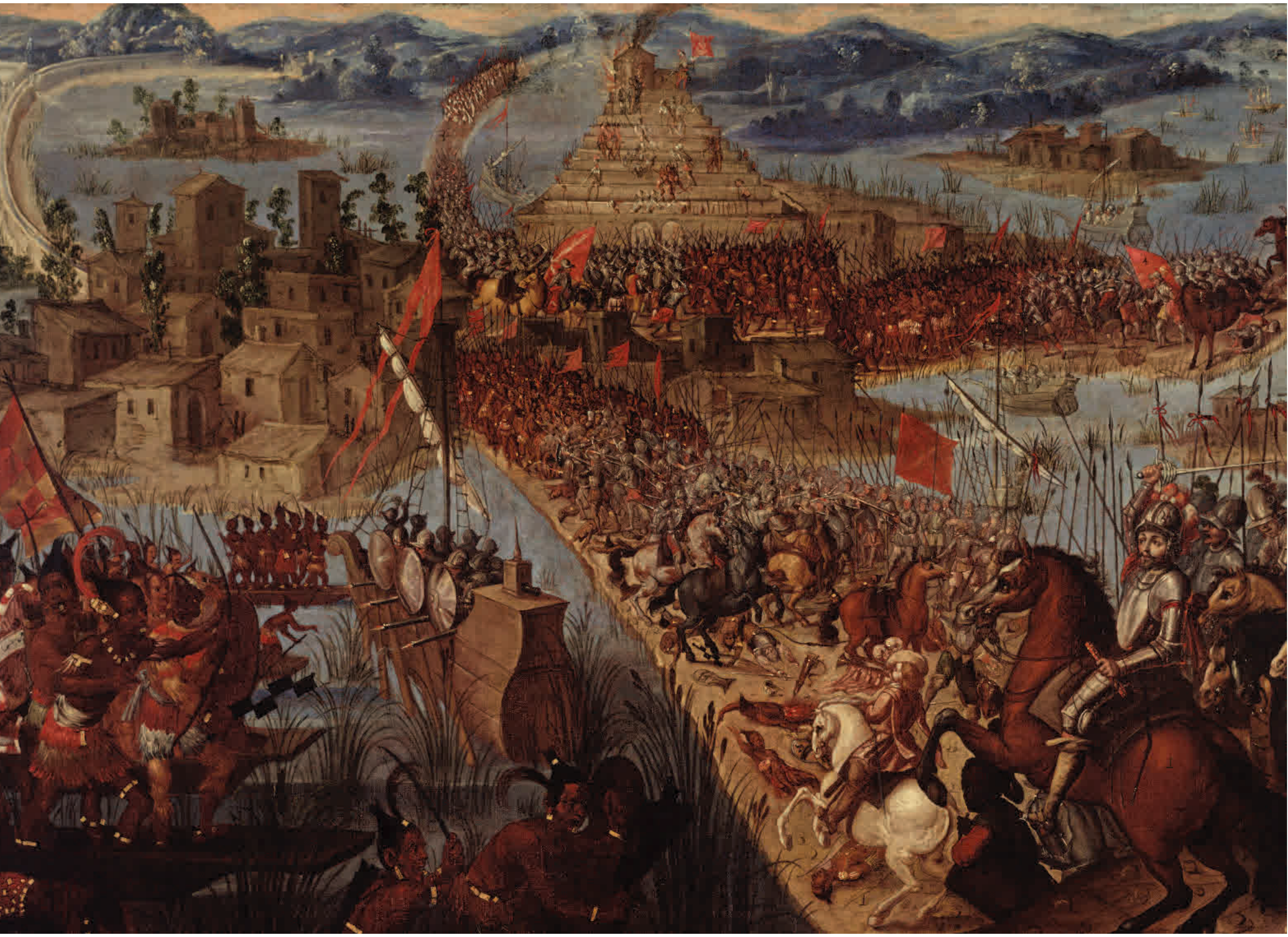
On 13 September, after a violent and almost frantic address from the cardinal, the redoubtable horns of Uri and Unterwald resounded through the streets of Milan; and though the day was far spent, the Swiss marched out by the Porta Eomana to give battle. When the alarm was given, Francis was about to sit down to table, and he immediately rushed out to place himself at the head of his guard. The Swiss penetrated to the French artillery and captured several batteries. The battle raged till near midnight, when the moon having gone down and left all in darkness, the French and Swiss battalions bivouacked, intermingling. Francis slept on a gun carriage. At daybreak, he rallied his scattered divisions by trumpet signals, when about 20,000 lansquenets and all his *gendarmerie* gathered round him. The Swiss renewed the attack with vigour, and the fortune of the day still hung trembling in the balance, when about nine o'clock Alviano appeared on the field with a small body of Venetians. At the cry of "St Mark!" the Swiss, fancying that the whole Venetian army was upon them, began to retire, but in such admirable order that the French were fain to leave them unmolested. The slaughter had been great on both sides. The veteran Trivulzio, who had been present at eighteen general engagements, observed that what he had hitherto seen had been mere child's play, but that this was a battle of giants. Bayard had displayed his accustomed valour. After the victory, Francis insisted on receiving the order of knighthood from his hand, than which no worthier could have bestowed it.

(adapted from the text: *The Battle Roll: an encyclopedia containing descriptions of Battles and Sieges* by Elbert Perce)

Alexandre Évariste Fragonard,
The Battle of Marignan, 14th September 1515, 1836.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 543 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon,
Versailles.







Siege and Fall of Tenochtitlan

(26 May – 13 August, 1521)

[The events described in the excerpt below detail the events of *La Noche Triste*, which effectively led to the siege and fall of the Aztec city, depicted on the left]

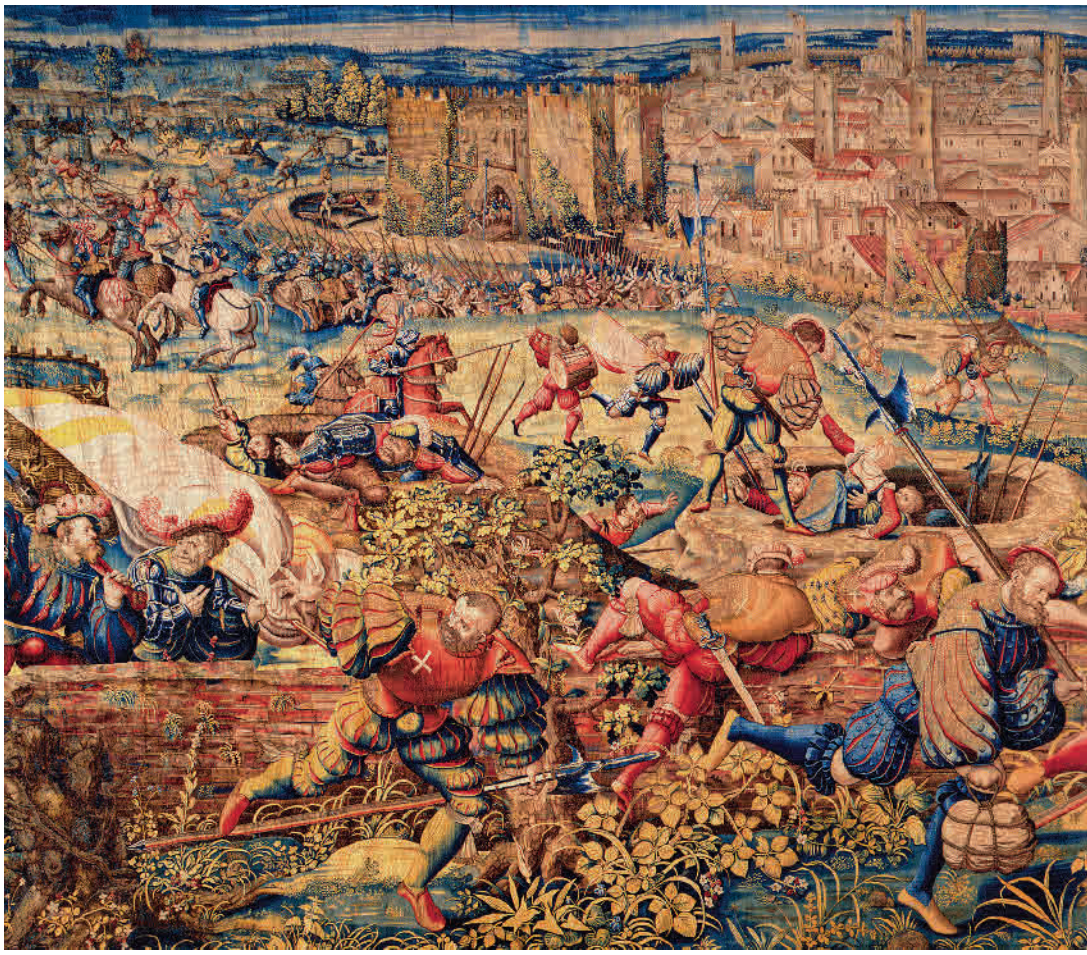
The ancient city of Mexico, or as it was called, Tenochtitlan, was built on a group of islands in the lake Tezcuco. The city was connected with the mainland by five principal causeways of stone and earth, about thirty feet in breadth, and extending from two to six miles over the surrounding marshes. The causeway of Iztapalapan approached the city from the south, that of Tepejucal from the north, and that of Tlacopan from the west. The causeways were pierced by several canals, which were provided with drawbridges.

Cortés, upon his first entrance into the Mexican capital, was entirely satisfied with his reception by Montezuma, and feeling that he had secured the friendship of the Mexican emperor and nobles, set out for Cempoalla, for the purpose of securing his alliance with the Cempoallans. He left behind him in the city 150 Spanish soldiers, and 10,000 Tlascalan warriors, under the command of Alvarado; and by the rashness of this officer the hostility of the citizens was provoked to an extent that soon threw the whole city into a state of insurrection. It was the custom of the Aztec nobles to hold an annual festival, in the month of May, in honour of their god of war; and they requested Alvarado to allow them to hold it in the court in the vicinity of the Spanish quarters. The Spanish general granted their request on certain conditions, one of which was that they should come unarmed. Accordingly, on the appointed day, the nobles and the principal men of the city, to the number of 600, met together in the place named, dressed in their richest attire.

Meanwhile Alvarado had concocted a scheme, so infernal in its character, that his name has been handed down in history, branded with infamy and disgrace. His soldiers were to be present at the festival, fully armed, some being directed to mingle with the crowd, while others, as if by accident, were to gather around the gates of the courtyard, and at a signal from him they were to fall upon and slay all before them. The festivities were at their height; the nobles engaged in dancing and music heeded not the presence of the Spaniards: the signal was given; instantly every Spanish sword leaped from its scabbard, and like demons the soldiers rushed upon the unarmed nobles, hewing them down right and left, until the pavement was piled with dead, and streaming with blood. Amid their gaiety and innocent diversion, this joyous company was furiously assailed by the treacherous Spaniards. In vain they strove to escape. Foes encompassed them on all sides. Some met their doom in stern inactivity; others sprang toward the gates, and were impaled on the lances of the soldiers; and others endeavoured to scale the wall, and were shot down or cut to pieces by their enemies. The courtyard, lately resounding with mirth and joyful music, was now filled with groans and cries of despair. At length all was silent. The cruel work was finished; all were slain; and now, glutted with slaughter, the Spaniards with blood-begrimed countenances, fell upon the mutilated corpses, like vultures, and rifled them of their jewels and precious ornaments.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

The Capture of Tenochtitlán, from the *Conquest of México* series, 2nd half of the 17th century.
Oil on canvas. Jay I. Kislak Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division,
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



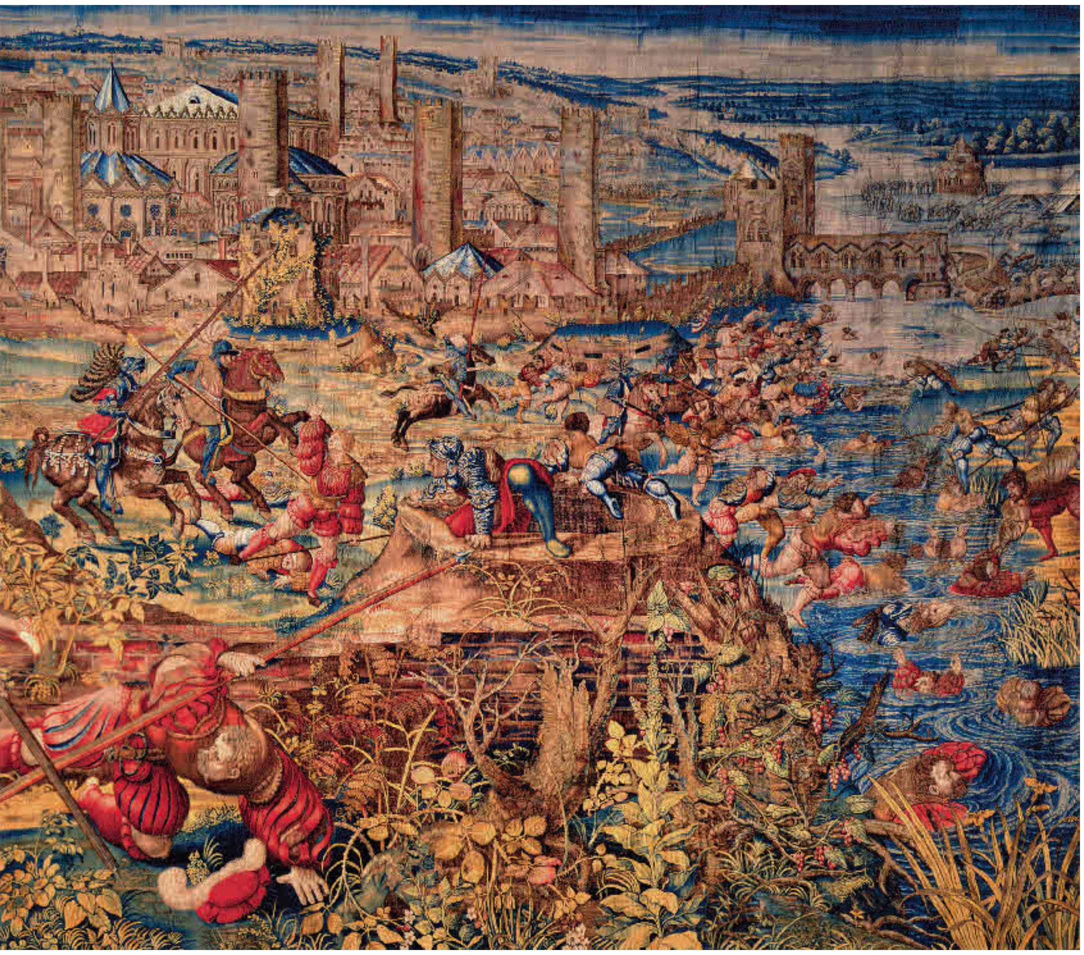
Battle of Pavia

(14 February, 1525)

If you lay siege to a town, you will exhaust your strength. Again, if the campaign is protracted, the resources of the State will not be equal to the strain. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 2, 3-4)

Francis I of France, after a brilliant campaign, in which he drove back the imperialists from Provence to the Milanese, very unwisely employed his army in sieges, instead of pursuing his enemies with vigour to the other side of the Carnic Alps. Accumulating errors, he weakened an army of 28,000 men by dividing it; detaching from it a body of 10,000 soldiers upon an expedition into the kingdom of Naples. He thus left his enemy time to recover, and to remain master, by means of the armies he was able to raise in Germany and Naples. After having taken Milan, he commenced the siege of Pavia. The siege was protracted, Pavia reduced to extremity and the garrison mutinied more than once for want of pay. Lannoi, viceroy of Naples for Charles V, was informed of the distresses of Pavia. At his approach, the French monarch called a council; prudence would have commanded him to avoid an engagement, to raise the siege, and to refresh and enlarge his army. But the monarch was deaf to the councils of wisdom; his romantic spirit fancied that his honour would be compromised.

The troops were nearly equal in numbers on both sides: the French army, reckoning 28,000 men, faced a 23,000-man Habsburg army. The imperialists first fell upon the rear guard of the French, placed at the castle and in the park of Mirabel. They expected to carry it if the king did not come to its assistance; and, if he did come, they should make him lose the advantage of the position in which he was fortified. What Lannoi anticipated, happened. Scarcely did the French monarch perceive the danger of his brother-in-law the Duke of Alençon,



he rushed forward at the head of his cavalry, and fell upon the imperialists. His artillery, placed with much skill by Gaillon de Genouillac, served with great spirit, and fired at first with such success that every volley carried away a file. Such a brilliant commencement dazzled Francis; he forgot that he owed all his success to his artillery, believed himself already the conqueror, and came out from his lines. This inconsiderate movement placed the prince between his own artillery and the fugitives, and rendered his cannon useless. The face of the battle was changed in a moment; the viceroy advanced with the gendarmerie and a body of arquebusiers; the king was pressed on all sides.

The French gendarmerie did not, in this battle, sustain its ancient reputation; it was beaten and almost destroyed by 1,500 Biscayans, of astonishing agility, who, separating by platoons of ten, twenty, or thirty men, attacked it with inconceivable celerity and address. It is said that Antonio de Leva had, for some time, trained these arquebusiers to fight thus in platoons, between the squadrons of the Spanish cavalry, and that he had borrowed the manoeuvre from the Greeks. A stratagem of Pescara's contributed still further to the success of the day.

Francis was conducted, after the action, across the field of battle, to the place he was to be confined in. The imperialists made him observe that all the Swiss guards had fallen in their ranks. "If all my troops had done their duty," said he, much affected by this spectacle, "as well as these brave fellows, I should not be your prisoner, but you would be mine."

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

After **Bernard van Orley**, *The Route of the Swiss Army at Pavia*, 1528-1531.
Tapestry, 424 x 886 cm.
Museo e Gallerie Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples.

Battle of Kawanakajima

(September, 1561)

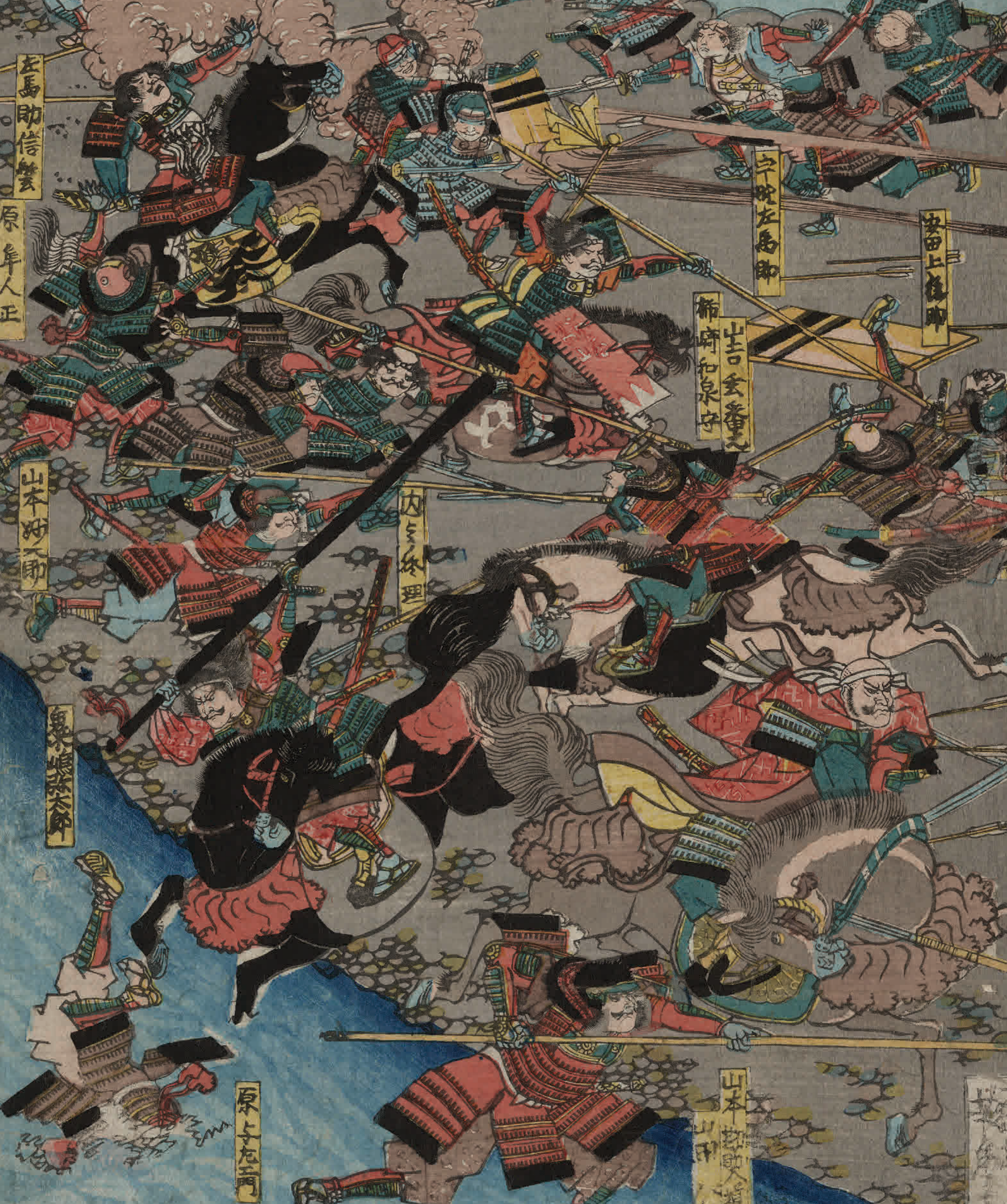
Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. [Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 19]

The Battles of Kawanakajima were fought between two Japanese warlords and their families during the Sengoku Period of Japan, "The Age of Warring States" – an era that was characterised by perpetual military conflict and social problems. In total, five battles were fought on and around the Kawanakajima plains and the Chikuma River that traverses the landscape, over the course of eleven years. The fourth battle was by far the most devastating of the five, thus usually referred to as "The Battle of Kawanakajima". The two warlords, who fought each other so doggedly, were Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin. If the conflict seems eerily similar to the Genpei War, it is only because the 16th century samurai were only too aware of the ancestral conflict themselves and invoked the memory of the old war. Takeda Shingen was even a descendant of the Minamoto clan that had fought their rivals for Japanese hegemony centuries earlier.

What caused the battle to become one of the bloodiest engagements of the period, were two stratagems. The first one, devised by Shingen's chief tactician, envisioned an early morning attack on the enemy camp by a large detachment of troops which would lead the enemy to retreat from the hills to the plains, where a smaller force, led by Takeda Shingen himself, would be lying in wait, having moved there hours before dawn in utter secrecy and stealth. The second stratagem, actually a counter-stratagem, was developed by Kenshin when he, due to either intelligence reports or carefully positioned scouts, was able to anticipate the movement of the Takeda army. Both plans were set in motion and the Takeda army saw itself suddenly confronted with the battle-ready Uesugi army charging into their vanguard on the morning of the battle. Despite the Uesugi having the element of surprise and even being able to push deep into the ranks of the Takeda, even reaching Takeda Shingen's command post, the Takeda army was able to hold. The commanders of the first detachment reacted quickly when they figured out where the army that they were supposed to take by surprise had gone, and were able to break through Uesugi Kenshin's rear guard. Thus, the almost failed strategem of catching the Uesugi army in a pincer movement still was successfully carried out. By this time both armies already had lost many warriors and leaders, which led Uesugi to make the decision to call for a truce and withdraw. Takeda Shingen was either unwilling or unable to effectively oppose his enemies' retreat. In the larger context of the Sengoku period, the battle was not decisive, despite its fame in history. Neither of the families could secure hegemony in Japan, as the heir of the Takeda family was not able to hold on to his father's legacy and Kenshin died after a long period of bad health before he could execute his plans for further conquest.

The 19th century woodblock print on the left is part of an Oban Nishiki-e tetraptych, showing a battle by the Chikuma River, presumed to be the fourth battle of Kawanakajima. The whole four-panel composition effectively conveys the melee and chaos of battle by arranging the majority of characters cluttered in half of the tetraptych and contrasting it with the relative calm of the river on the left, that is only disturbed by a few combatants carrying the fight into the water. The panel shown here depicts the thick of the fighting.

Utagawa Yoshitora, *The Great Battle at Kawanakajima in Shinshu*,
(tetraptych, centre-right panel), 1844-1848.
Woodcut, colour, 35.1 x 24.5 cm.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.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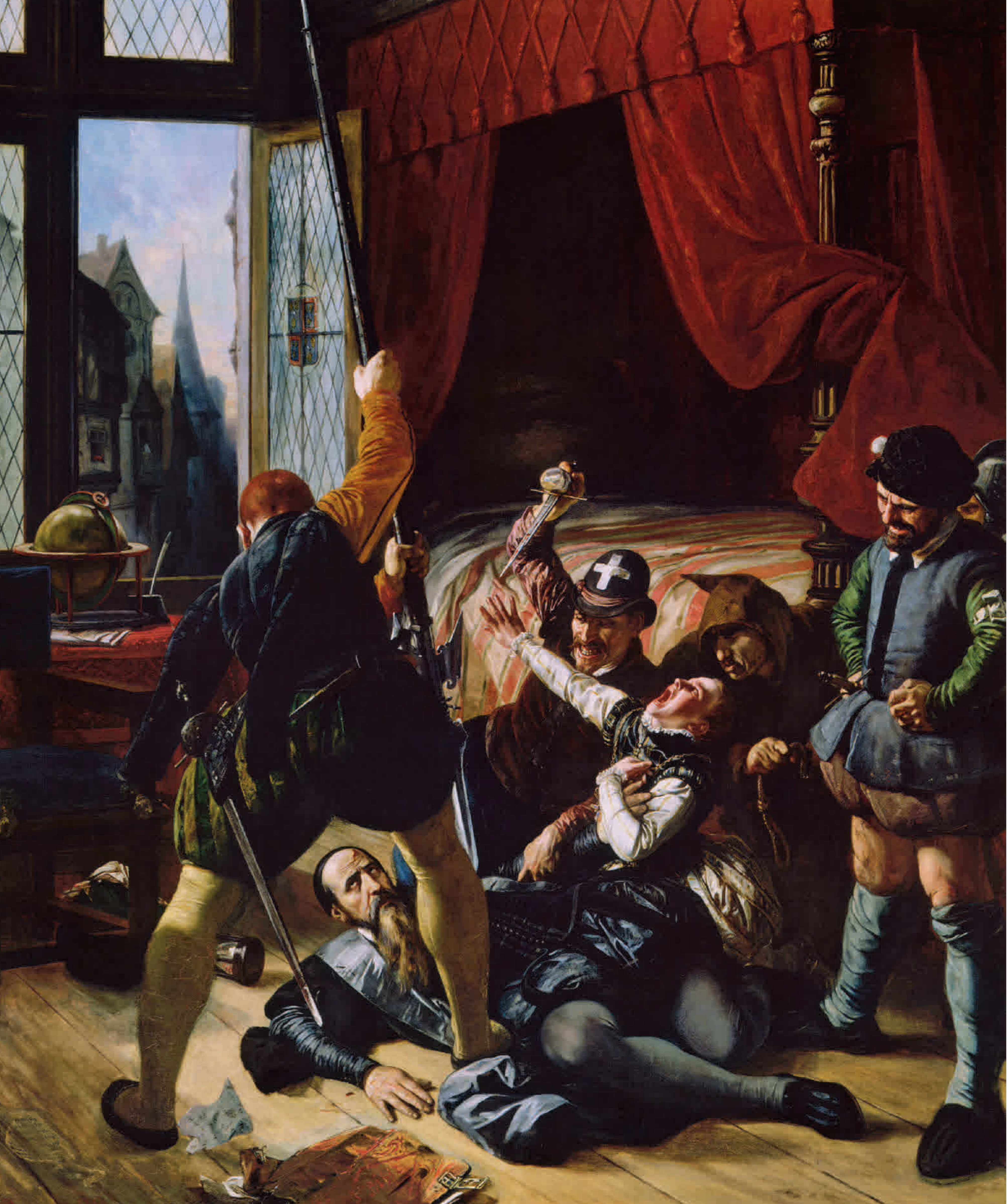
泉嶋孫太郎
原与左衛門
山本勘助入道
山中



St Bartholomew's Day Massacre

(23-24 August, 1572)

This massacre, being of this character, is one of those debateable points of history on which a large latitude of opinion must be allowed to everyone. Therefore, without censuring any person for a contrary judgement, the present Author submits to his Readers that view of the subject, which he considers to represent the real circumstances of the transaction, in the form of the following propositions:

That the massacre was no premeditated act of Charles IX, though finally ordered by him; but that it was planned by others, and suddenly urged upon him with false or deceiving communications, and with circumstances of great personal alarm, which hurried his frightened mind into the measure. That Guise began the execution, and that the Romish and Spanish party in Paris extended and completed it; and that the same party continuing their machinations to inflame and pervert the king's mind, it was also perpetrated afterwards in various parts of France.

The marriage of Henry of Navarre with the king's sister having been finally agreed upon in July, on 18 August, the ceremony took place with great pomp. Most of the Protestant nobility and gentry attended, with their families, to the number of nearly one thousand gentlemen. The Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, were passed in all sorts of festivities. The admiral partook of them, and was always courteously treated by the king, as before and on 20 August, when he went to the king to confer on some matters of importance, Charles laughingly asked to be allowed three or four days to amuse himself, and pledged his royal word that he would not leave Paris until he had fully satisfied both him and his friends.

The admiral had received an anonymous warning to take care of himself, and that the king had been repeatedly told that the Huguenots meant to destroy him, but had declared that there was no reason for any mistrust. It was on the second day afterwards, that, early in the morning on 24 August, an armed force attacked the unsuspecting Protestants at Paris, and the horrible massacre took place. After this massacre, the Duke Of Guise, followed by armed satellites, went in haste to the house of admiral Coligny. Having forced the outward gate, the Swiss of the Navarrese guard opposed them; but their captain and some men were killed on the spot. The duke, who had awaited in the court the issue of the first enterprise, ordered some of his soldiers to go up to the admiral's chamber. A French soldier then went to him and shot him.

From the preceding facts, it appears that the chief authors of the first part of these massacres were, the Due d'Anjou, afterwards Henry III and the Duc de Guise; and that the latter was an active executioner in them. The end of both leads us to recollect the lines of Juvenal, which Creech has thus translated:

The gods take aim before they strike the blow;
Most sure their vengeance, tho the stroke be slow:

For never was the moral retribution more signally exacted than on these exalted culprits. On 14 December 1588, this Henry III had the Duc de Guise, and his brother the cardinal, suddenly murdered at Blois, and Henry himself perished sometime afterwards under the dagger of Jacques Clement.

(adapted from: *The Modern History of England* by S. Turner)

Joseph-Nicolas Robert-Fleury, *The Assassination of Brion,*
Tutor to the Prince of Conti at the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, 1833.
Oil on canvas, 164 x 130 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Battle of Arques

(15-18 September, 1589)

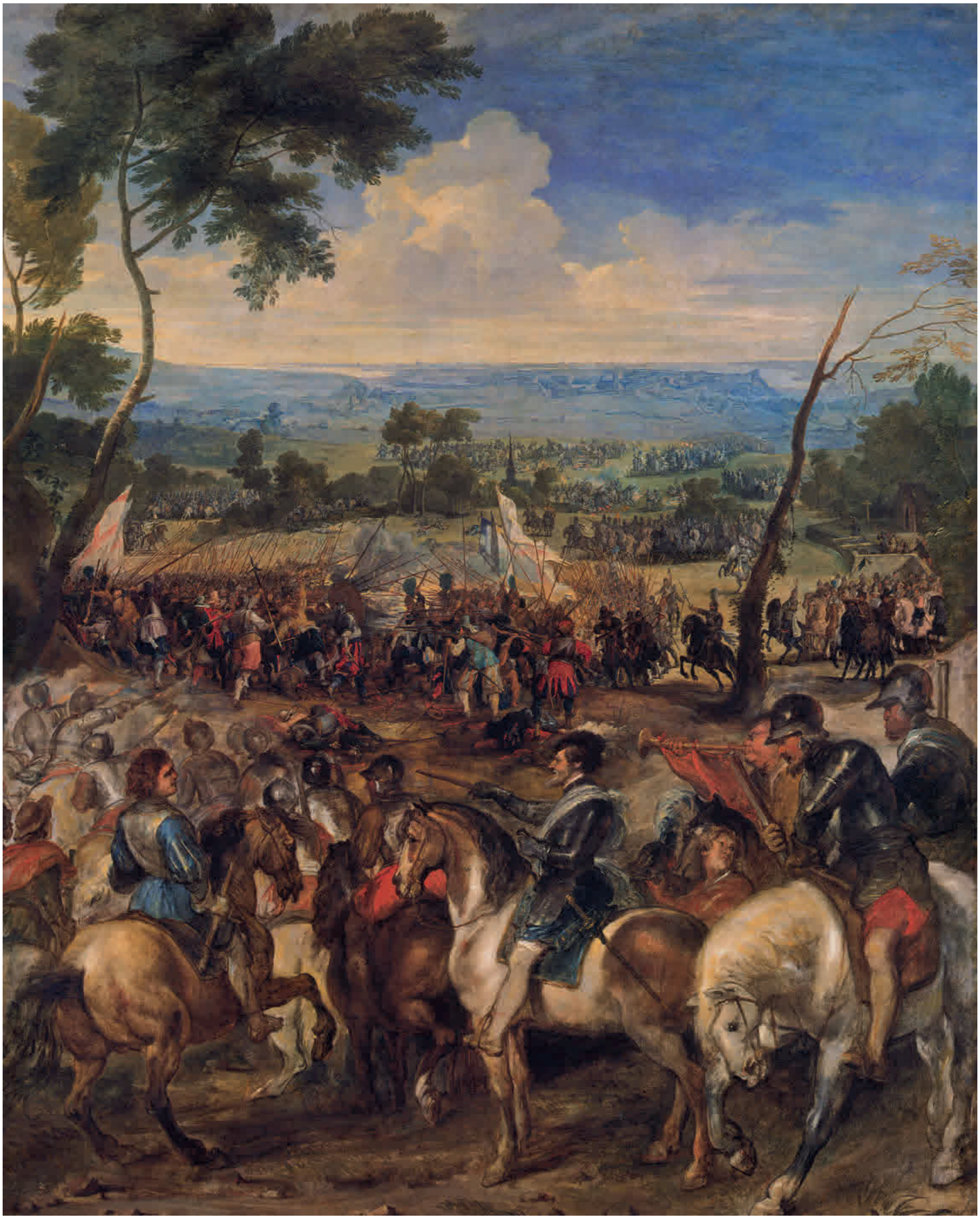
All warfare is based on deception. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 1, 18)

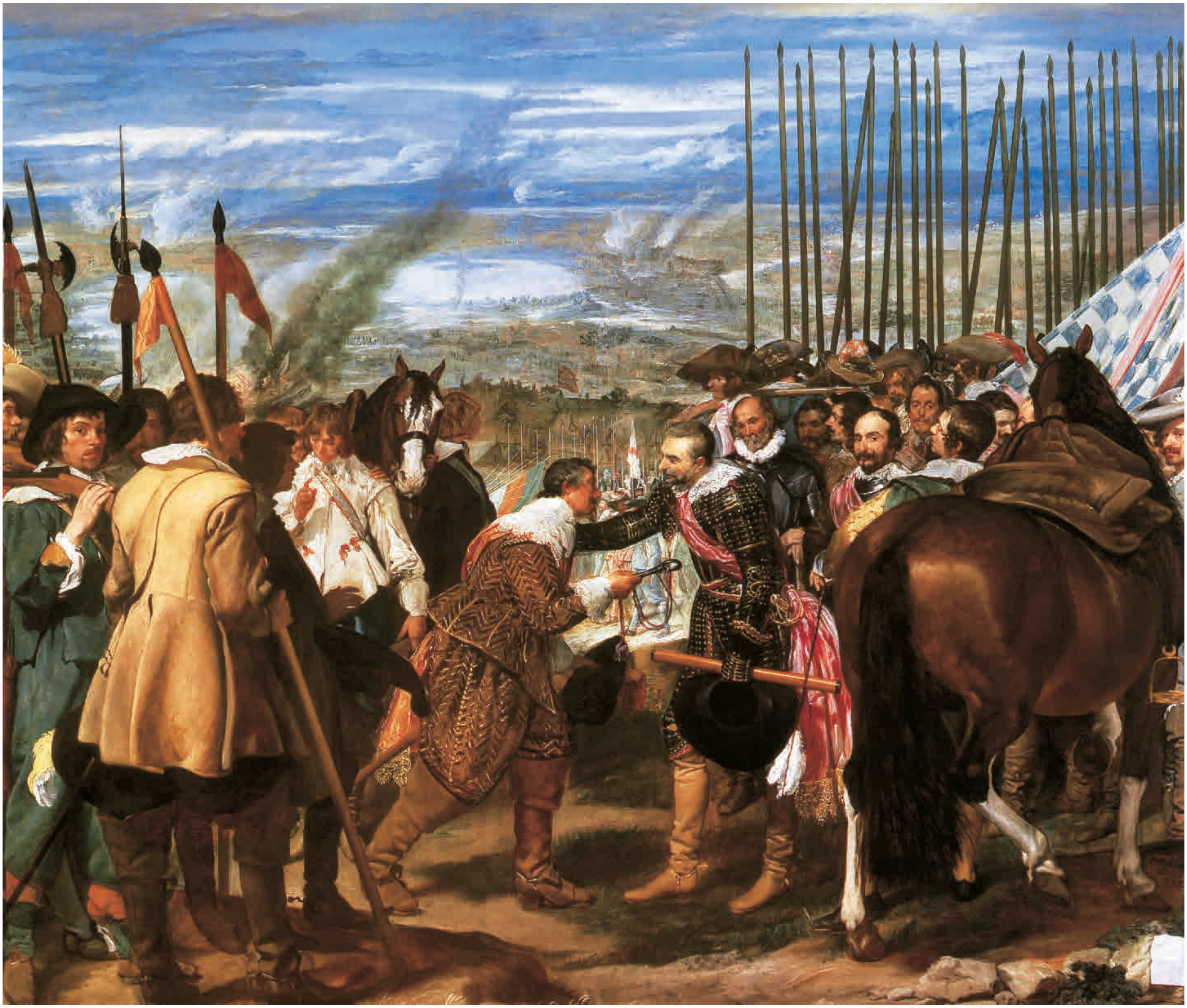
The Duke of Mayenne, military leader of the Catholic League, arrived on the evening of 15 September, and took up his quarters at a small village called Martin d'Eglise, separated from Arques by the river Bethune. Finding King Henry's position very strong on that side, he suddenly attacked the suburb of Dieppe, called Polet, the following day. Chatillon was posted there, and made a successful sortie, which threw the assailants into confusion; Marshal Biron then came to his assistance, and completely defeated them, pursuing them into the village of Martin Eglise.

Every day produced skirmishes and attacks, but most of them were of no importance. It was believed at the time that there was a division in the councils of the league; their leaders were so confident of success that they made premature arrangements for the division of the spoil. The distribution of the various governments and charges created disputes among them, which were with difficulty appeased, and a delay naturally arose in their operations. At length, on one evening, orders were given to pass the river after midnight, and attack before dawn the king's forces posted at a place called La Maladerie. Notwithstanding the superiority of their numbers, and the violence of their attack, they were driven back with great loss, and found themselves immediately attacked on three points by the king in person, by Biron and by Chatillon. Finding it impossible to gain the place by force, treachery was used. There were German soldiers in each army, and those in the king's service were employed at that very post. Their countrymen approached the trenches, and, on calling out that they wished to join the king, were assisted in getting into the fort. They were readily believed in their declarations, as a report had been circulated that they wished for an opportunity to abandon the Duke of Mayenne, who did not pay them. No sooner, however, were they in the fort than they attacked the king's troops. The king also was engaged in the conflict almost alone. When Henry found himself struggling in the midst of his enemies he considered his cause lost, but persevered in trying to rally his men who fled in every direction. In a tone of despair, he exclaimed, "What, are there not, in all France, fifty gentlemen who have resolution enough to die with their king?" Chatillon was then pressing forward to assist him with five hundred musqueteers; he was near enough to hear the king's appeal, and immediately answered, "Courage, sire! Here we are, ready to die with you." They immediately attacked the treacherous Lansquenets, and drove them out of the fort. Night coming on, the Duke of Mayenne found he could expect to gain no advantage, and retired with his men into his awn lines, the king remaining master of the field of battle. In the meantime, the arrival of the Duke of Longueville and Marshal d'Aumont reinforced the royal army, and five thousand men having been sent by Queen Elizabeth, with a supply of ammunition, and a considerable sum of money, Mayenne abondoned his design, and marched his army into Picardy. Nothing could be more complete than his disgrace, for the accounts he had forwarded to Paris were of the most boasting kind, and the Lansquenets in their treacherous attack having obtained four or five standards, he sent them to the Duchess of Montpensier. Couriers brought accounts of the Duke of Mayenne having offered to surrender provided his life were spared, and they announced that he would be brought captive to Paris to grace Mayenne's triumphal entry.

(adapted from: *A History of the Huguenots during the Sixteenth Century*
by W.S. Browning)

Peter Paul Rubens and **Pieter Snayers**, *Henry IV at the Battle of Arques*, 17th century.
Oil on canvas, 340 x 276 cm.
Bavarian State Painting Collections, Alte Pinakothek, Munich.





Siege of Breda

(27 August, 1624 – 2 June, 1625)

Confront your soldiers with the deed itself; never let them know your design. When the outlook is bright, bring it before their eyes; but tell them nothing when the situation is gloomy. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 57)

The siege of the Dutch fortress city of Breda was one of the last Spanish victories of the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648), led by the Italian nobelman, Ambrogio Spinola (1569-1630), a General in Spanish service for the house of Habsburg, which, at that time, was trying to regain its influence in the Netherlands against the revolting Seventeen Provinces.

At the beginning of his career, Spinola decided to join the Spanish forces in the Low Countries. After the manner of the old Italian *condottieri*, or leaders, who collected forces on their own account, and then served at their head under the pay of the Italian states, he was permitted to pay his troops himself, and to receive his compensation from the Spanish treasury. This circumstance, at a time when the conduct of wars depended so much upon the troops being paid regularly, and the best concerted expeditions failed for want of money, assured him of the success which soon rendered him so celebrated. While mutiny and insubordination prevailed in the rest of the army, his 9,000 Walloons were models of discipline and order.

Under Spinola's orders, the Spanish laid siege the important town of Breda, which was the patrimonial inheritance of the princes of Orange, in August, 1624. Breda was one of the strongest fortifications in the Dutch Republic's line of defence between the territory that is the present Dutch province of North Brabant and the Spanish-controlled Southern Netherlands. The city was heavily fortified and had a sizeable garrison. Spinola rapidly invested its defences and succesfully fought back a Dutch relief army under Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange (1567-1625), who was the stadtholder of the United Provinves of the Netherlands. In February, 1625, a second relief force, consisting of 7,000 Englishmen under Horace Vere and Ernst von Mansfeld, was also driven off. The Spaniards enclosed the city within two rings of field fortifications protected by 96 redoubts, 37 forts and 45 batteries. The besiegers did not fire on the bastions and works of the city itself, but allowed starvation to produce capitulation. Finally Justin of Nassau, Maurice's brother, surrendered Breda in June 1625 after a costly eleven-month siege. Breda was recaptured by the Dutch in 1637 and after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the United Provinces' independence was confirmed and northern Brabant was formally ceded to the United Provinces as Staats-Brabant, a federally governed territory.

The Siege of Breda is maybe best known from a painting by Diego Velázquez (1599-1660), *The Surrender of Breda*.

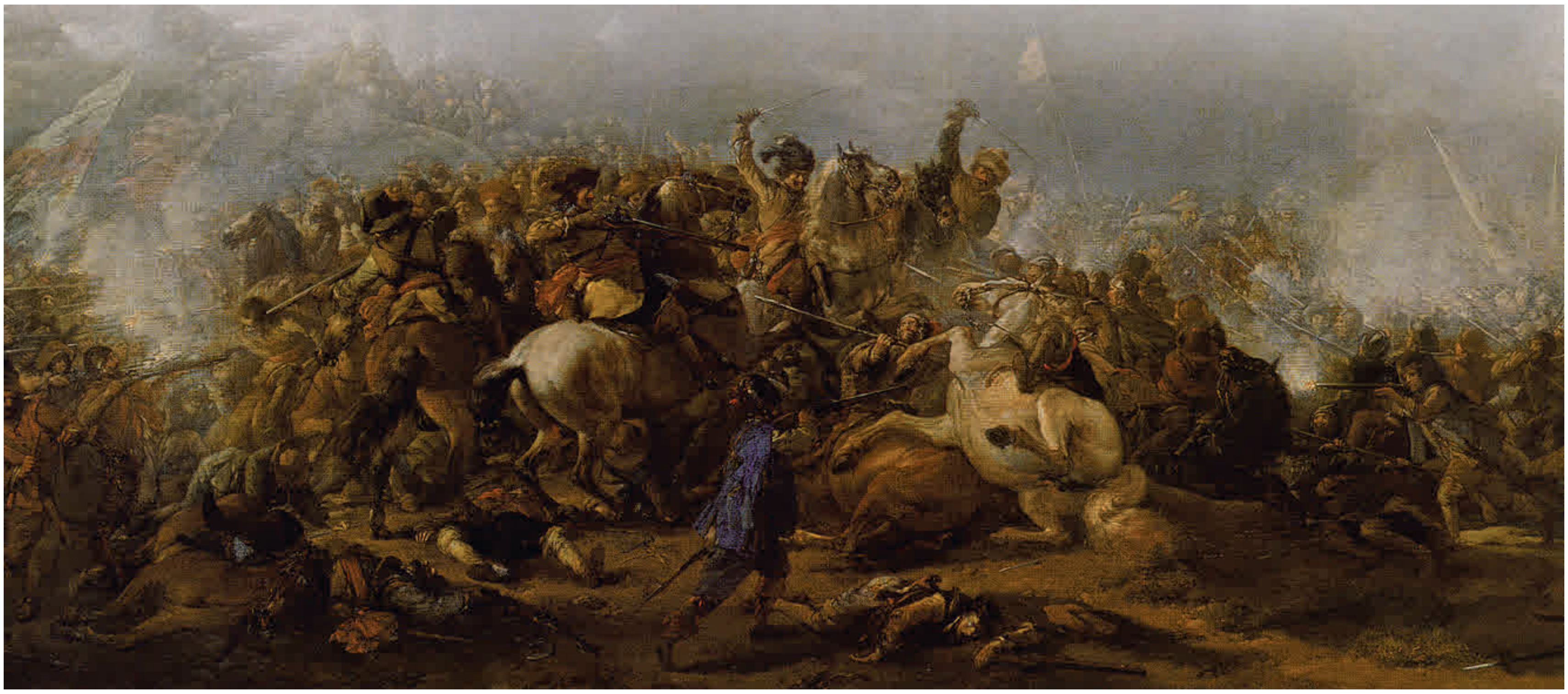
We see the commander of the Spanish forces, Ambrogio Spinola, and his opponent, Justin of Nassau, in the fields outside the city, Spinola placing a consoling hand on Justin's shoulder as the Dutchman turns over the key to the city – two military men meeting in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

And indeed after capturing the city, Spinola declined to humiliate the Dutch.

Spinola's behavior at Breda was not altogether characteristic of Spain's conduct during the war, which tended to be quite brutal. Thus some have seen Velázquez's *Surrender of Breda* as little more than brilliant propaganda, portraying a fleeting instance of Spanish munificence. But others have perceived a poignant piece of wish-fulfillment, evidence of Spain's desire for an honorable outcome to a largely futile war.

(adapted from: *Encyclopædia Americana* by F. Lieber et al.)

Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velázquez, *The Surrender of Breda*, 1635.
Oil on canvas, 307 x 367 cm.
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.



Battle of Nördlingen

(5-6 September, 1634)

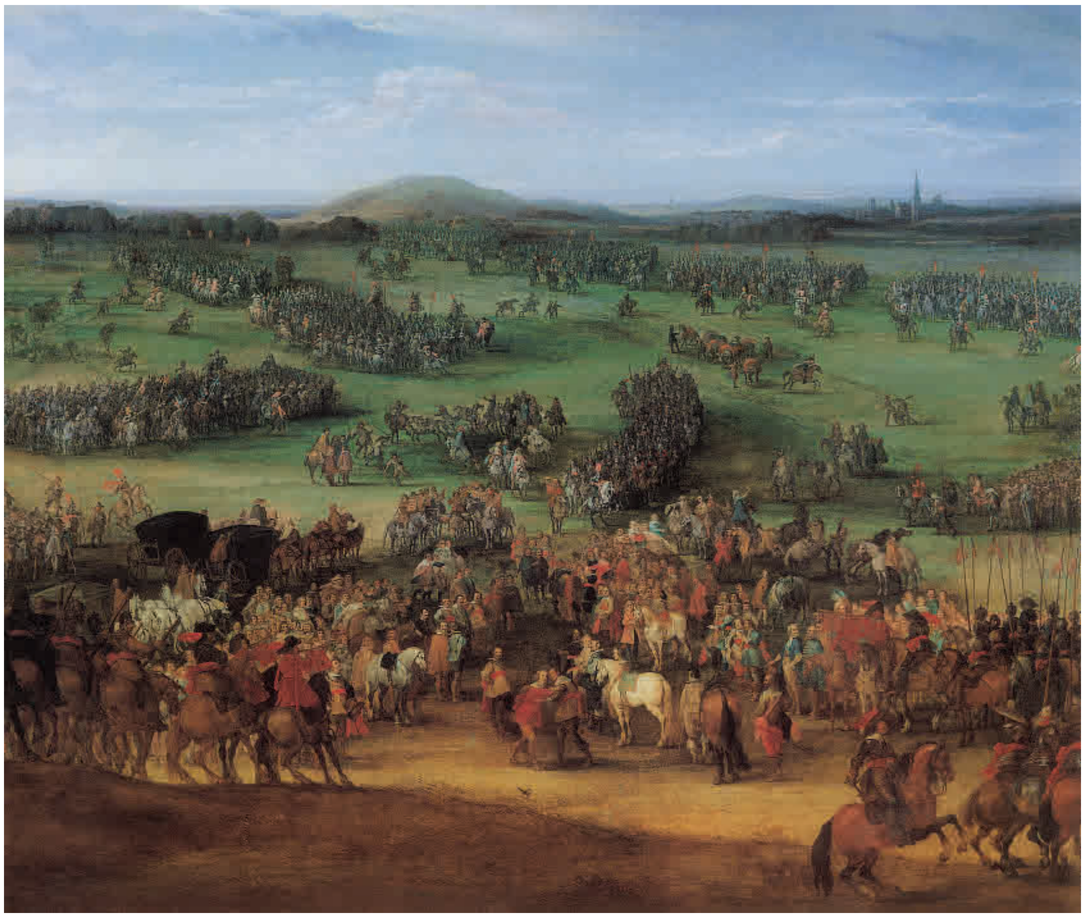
Numerical weakness comes from having to prepare against possible attacks; numerical strength, from compelling our adversary to make these preparations against us. Knowing the place and the time of the coming battle, we may concentrate from the greatest distances in order to fight. But if neither time nor place be known, then the left wing will be impotent to succor the right, the right equally impotent to succor the left, the van unable to relieve the rear, or the rear to support the van. How much more so if the furthest portions of the army are anything under a hundred LI apart, and even the nearest are separated by several LI! (Sun Tzu, Ch. 6, 18-20)

In 1634, during the celebrated Thirty Years' War, a battle was fought near Nordlingen, in Bavaria, between the Austrian and Bavarian army under the Archduke Ferdinand, and the Swedes and their allies under the famous Bernard, Duke of Weimar. The latter were defeated, with considerable loss.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

What the short excerpt from Perce's encyclopedia fails to mention is that the Protestant forces were already decimated from previous engagements and their hasty attempt to prevent the meeting of the Spanish and Austrian forces. The Catholic armies were also vastly superior in number, additionally bolstered by Italian cavalry loyal to the Spanish crown; an aspect – though noted by the Protestant command – that was strangely underestimated and ignored. One could speculate that the necessity to relieve the besieged town of Nördlingen forced their hand into the numerically disproportionate battle. During the battle,

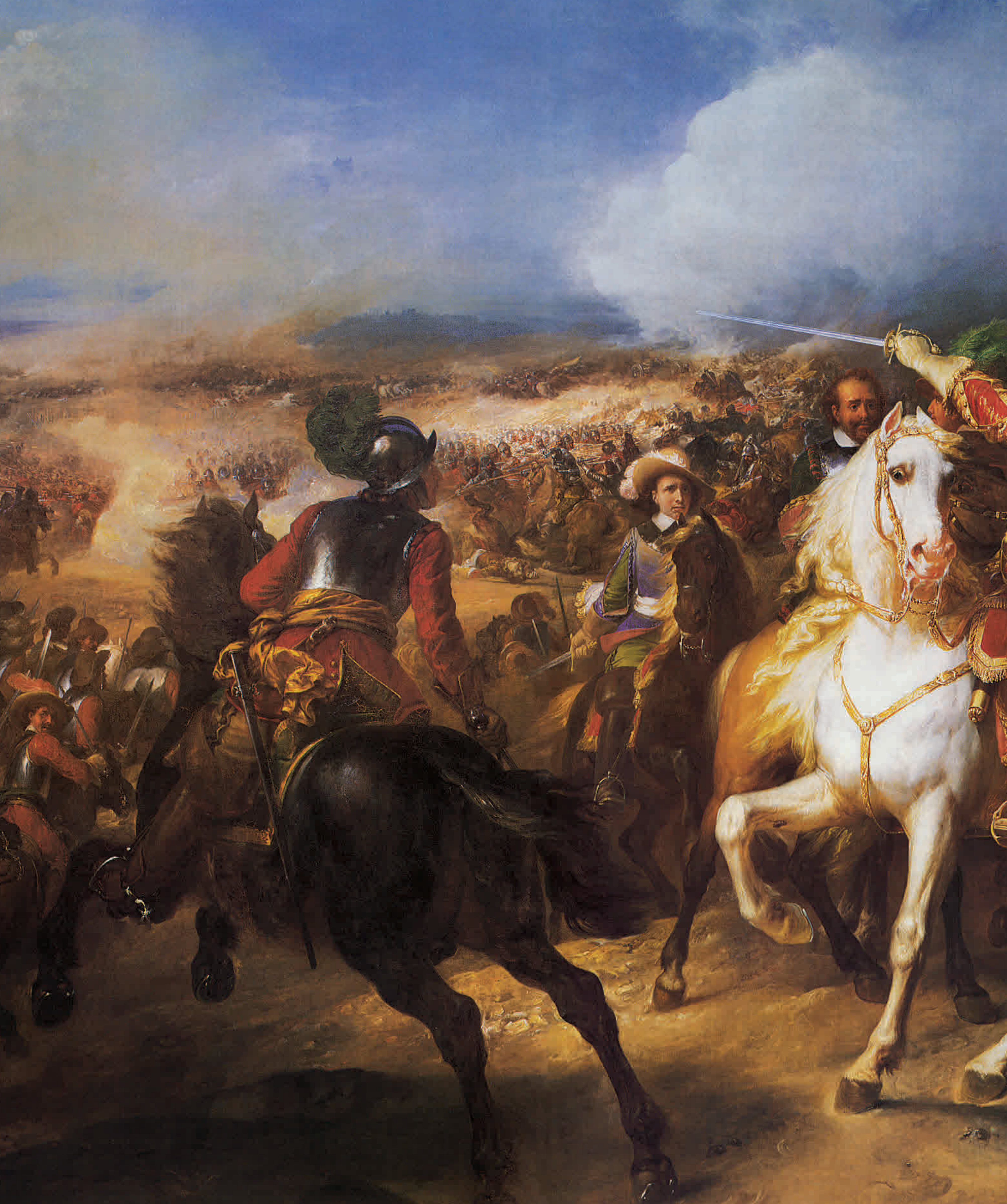
Philips Wouwerman, *The Battle of Nordlingen*, 17th century.
Oil on canvas, 52 x 78 cm.
Bavarian State Painting Collections, Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

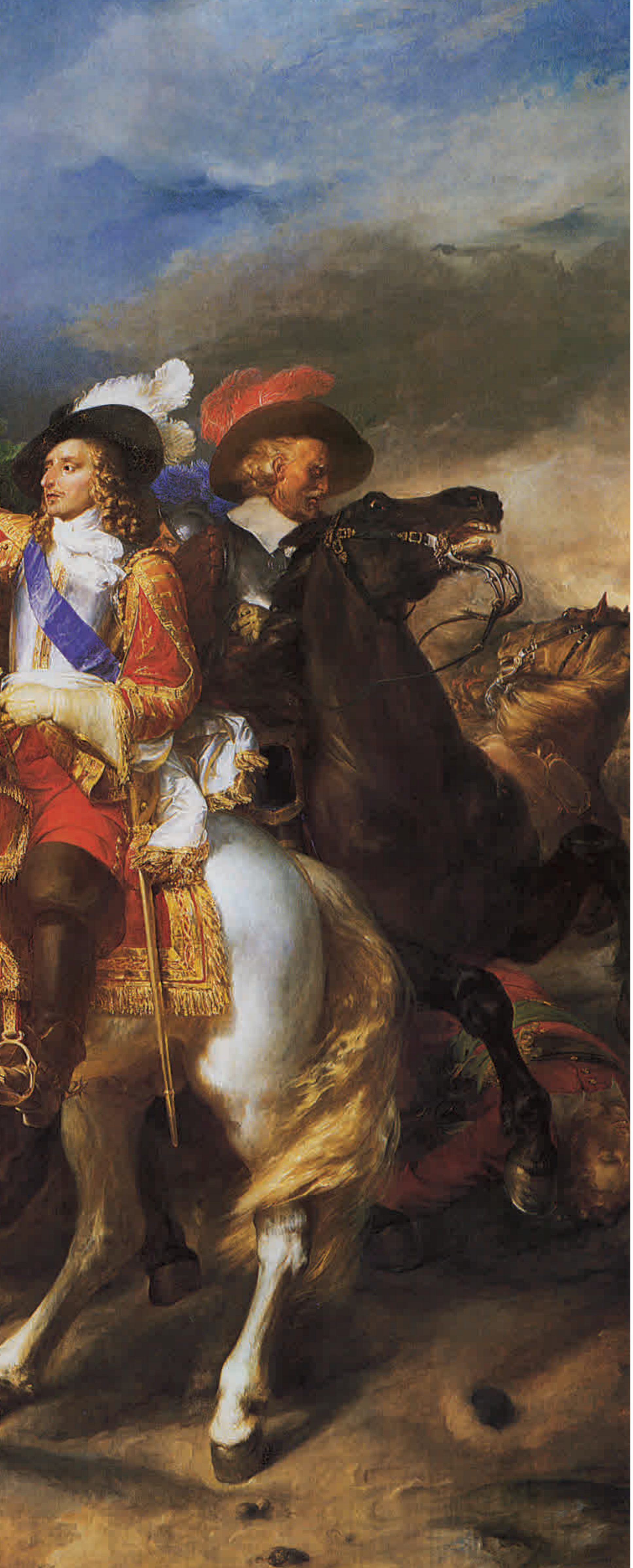


the combined armies fared poorly as all their assaults were driven back by the classical Spanish pike-and-shot formation (the *Tercio*, ironically modified to be more efficient by Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus in this very war) and the German detachment weakened its structure by sending too large a reinforcement to the Swedish ranks, rendering itself vulnerable for the final Spanish assault that broke their lines. The German retreat also endangered the Swedish regiments as the enemies' pursuit threatened to block their own route for retreat. This quickly led to the breaking-up of their formations into a fleeing throng of panicking soldiers. Apart from the considerable loss that the protestant forces had to suffer, the battle also had long-ranging consequences beyond the Thirty Years' War. While it did not immediately secure a victory for the House of Habsburg, it led to France's entry into the war, taking over from Sweden as the dominant power at the end of the war, with the most leverage at the negotiating table. Naturally, France's supremacy would have a long-lasting effect on the European power-constellation for decades and centuries to come.

Paintings inspired by the battle – if not detailing random battle scenes – mainly focused on the two cousins, Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand of Austria and Ferdinand of Hungary and their meeting before the actual fight. Notable are Cornelius Schut's *Sieg bei Nördlingen* ("Victory at Nördlingen", c. 1635; Stadsmuseum, Ghent) and Peter Paul Ruben's *Begegnung König Ferdinands von Ungarn mit dem Kardinalinfanten Ferdinand vor der Schlacht bei Nördlingen* ("The Meeting of King Ferdinand of Hungary with Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand before the Battle of Nördlingen", 1634/1635; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

Pieter Meulener, *The Battle of Nordlingen II*, c. 1634.
Oil on canvas, 148 x 183 cm.
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.





Battle of Lens

(20 August, 1648)

[…] *even though the enemy should offer us an attractive bait, it will be advisable not to stir forth, but rather to retreat, thus enticing the enemy in his turn; then, when part of his army has come out, we may deliver our attack with advantage.* (Sun Tzu, Ch. 10, 7)

Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Condé arrived in sight of the town Lens on 20 August 1648, a few hours after it had surrendered; and he found the archduke Leopold of Austria's victorious army in a position which, eager as he was for battle, he could not venture to attack. For the first time in his life he decided on retreating; but his rear guard was presently seen to be separated by a considerable interval from the main body of the army. General Beck, who commanded the archduke's cavalry, saw the opportunity and charged the isolated battalion. On hearing the tumult, Condé had turned back to try and arrest the confusion. All was nearly lost, when Marshall Antoine III de Gramont turned the fortune of the day. He halted the advanced guard, and leading it back towards the now triumphant enemy, gave time for those regiments which had been driven in to rally behind the firm line which he presented. The battle now became general. It soon came to be a contest of hard fighting, unvaried by manoeuvres on either side; and in hard fighting no troops could stand before those who might be led by Condé. His fiery valour was contagious and irresistible. He hastened to and fro over the field, leading on one division and another, wherever the fire was the hottest, or the enemy the most unyielding, till at last victory declared for him in every part of the line.

(adapted from: *The History of France under the Bourbons* by C.D. Yonge)

Jean-Pierre Franque, *The Battle of Lens*, c. 1835.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 543 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon,
Versailles.

Battle of the Dunes (Battle of Dunkirk)

(14 June, 1658)

It is a military axiom not to advance uphill against the enemy, nor to oppose him when he comes downhill. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 33)

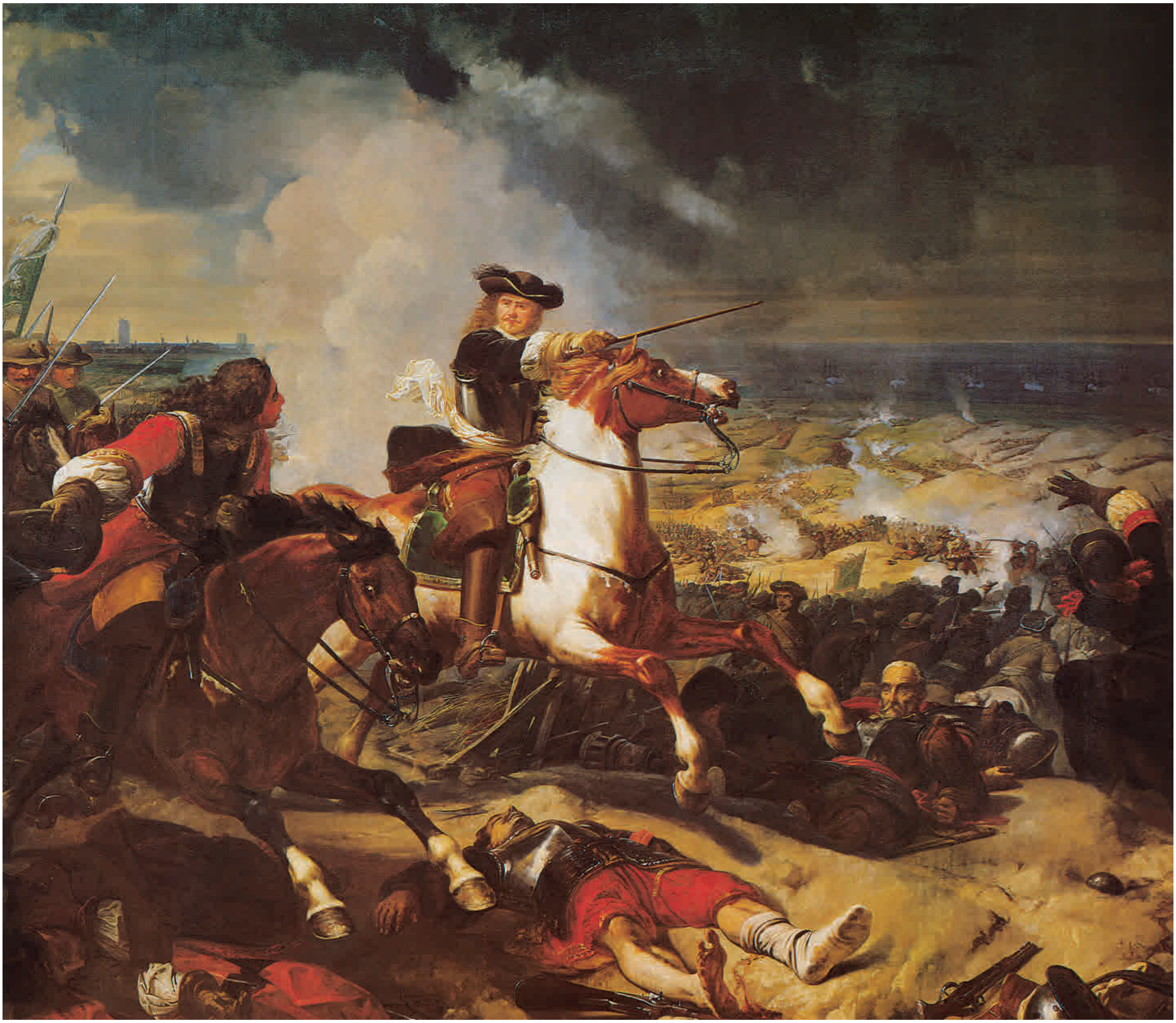
In the year 1658, Spain declared war against Cromwell, Protector of England, and he concluded an alliance with France, uniting himself in all his counsels with that potent and ambitious kingdom. Cromwell was particularly desirous of conquest and dominion on the continent, and he sent over into Flanders 6,000 men under Reynolds, who joined the French army, commanded by Turenne, and the combined army opened the campaign with the siege of Dunkirk, then in the possession of the Spaniards, who had garrisoned it with about 1,000 men. The Spanish army, under Don Juan, consisting of 6,000 infantry, and 4,000 cavalry, marched to the relief of Dunkirk, and on 3 June, 1658, encamped between the village of Zuydcoote, and the hues of the besiegers. Turenne resolved to attack the Spaniards at once, and on the morning of 4 June, advanced in battle array against the enemy. The Spanish general hastily placed his men along a ridge of sand-hills which extended from the sea-coast to a canal, and gave the command of the right wing to James, Duke of York (afterward James II), the left wing was under the Prince of Condé, and the centre was under the command of Don Juan, in person. The allied army was drawn up with the French on the right and the English on the left.

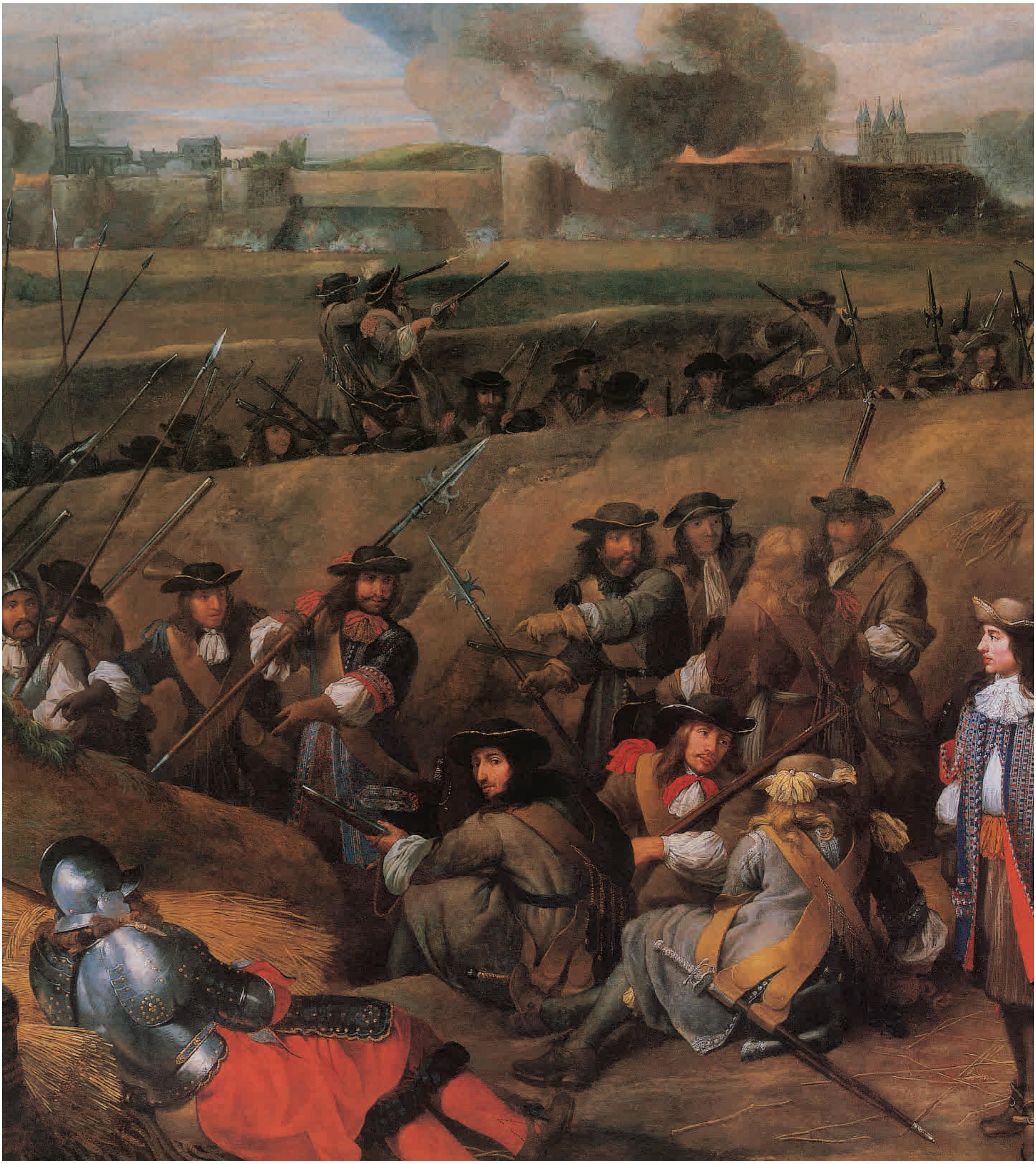
The English commenced the battle. They were led by Major General Morgan, who found himself opposed to his countryman, the Duke of York. With the greatest ardour the English advanced, receiving the fire of the enemy without flinching, and charging at the point of the pike, drove the enemy from their position. The Duke of York, at the head of the Spanish cavalry charged like a whirlwind upon the English, but a well-directed fire of musketry drove him back with great loss; but the fight had been so obstinate, that of the English scarcely an officer remained to take the command. Meanwhile, the Prince of Condé was fiercely assailed on the left by the French under Turenne, and was compelled to retreat by the bank of the canal. The centre of the Spanish army was never engaged; for the regiment on its extreme left, seeing itself flanked by the French in pursuit of Condé, precipitately abandoned its position, and the whole line soon fled in the greatest disorder.

The Duke of York, meanwhile, had rallied his cavalry, and charged the French in flank at the head of his company of horse-guards. The French were thrown into disorder; but they maintained the fight with obstinate valour, employing the butt ends of their muskets against the swords of their adversaries, until several squadrons of French cavalry arrived to their aid. James was surrounded; and in despair of saving himself by flight he boldly assumed the character of a French officer; riding at the head of twenty troops toward the right of their army, and carefully threading his way through the different corps, arrived without exciting suspicion at the bank of the canal, by which he speedily effected his escape to Fermes. The victory on the part of the allies was complete. The Spanish cavalry made no attempt to protect the retreat of their infantry; every regiment of which was successively surrounded by the pursuers, and compelled to surrender. On 17 June Dunkirk capitulated, and the King of France with his own hands delivered the keys to the English embassador.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Charles Philippe Larivière, *Battle of the Dunes, 14th June 1658*, 1837.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 543 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.





Battle of Tournai

(21-25 June, 1667)

No ruler should put troops into the field merely to gratify his own spleen; no general should fight a battle simply out of pique. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 12, 18)

No monarch ever went to war more wantonly and unnecessarily than Louis XIV. Inflated with vanity and self-love, intoxicated with flattery, he seemed to look upon military glory as the only thing wanting to his fame and happiness. But never did a monarch receive a much stronger rebuke from an overruling Providence! He was taught that the prosperity of nations is not to be trifled with for the gratification of one man's pride; and the wars he undertook so rashly and wickedly proved to be the sources of misery to which his arrogant self-sufficiency would have led him to believe he could not be subjected.

In 1666, Louis XIV lost his mother, Anne of Austria; Philip IV, his father-in-law, had died the preceding year. When Louis married Princess Maria Theresa, in 1660, she had formally renounced all right of succession to Spain or the Austrian dominions; but Louis, now heedless of this renunciation, immediately laid claim to Flanders, to the exclusion of Charles II, the minor son of Philip IV. The pretence he assigned was that the queen's dowry not having been paid, her renunciation was null and void, and he invoked a custom of Brabant, by which the eldest daughters inherited in preference to younger sons. He supported these claims by a numerous army; won over the Emperor Leopold, by giving him hopes he might share the spoils of Charles II, and took the field at the head of his household. Turenne commanded under him; Vauban, and his minister Louvois, accompanied him. We have often, when contemplating this siege of Tournai, wondered what Louis could really think of himself – what he imagined his position actually was in the scale of humanity. He proceeded to inflict war upon an unoffending people – of war, the direst evil we know or can fancy – with all the "pride, pomp and circumstance" of a barbarous Eastern despot.

Louis's army consisted of 35,000 men. It was on this occasion that the minister Louvois introduced the improvement of supporting armies by magazines. Whatever siege the king undertook, to whichever side he directed his arms, supplies of all kinds were ready, the lodgings of the troops were provided, and the marches regulated. The king had only to present himself before the cities of Flanders to subdue them: he entered Charleroi as he would have entered Paris; Bergues-Saint-Veux, Ath, Furnes, Armentière, and Coutrai, opened their gates at the approach of the French battalions. Tournai showed signs of resistance, though it was besieged in form and the artillery brought to bear upon it. Here was a beleaguered town, suffering all the horrors of a siege, with almost the certainty of being taken; there was an army appearing to invade the rights of another nation in mere wantonness, indulging in voluptuous vice and, in contrast with the town, passing its nights in festivity, song, music and dancing. King Louis was accompanied by his queen and his then adored mistress, the fascinating Montespan, with whom he lived in a state of double adultery. His court was with him in all its splendour.

Two days after the trenches had been opened, Tournai capitulated. The citadel was then closely pressed, and that likewise surrendered on the morrow. The conqueror had both city and citadel fortified; and Mégrigni made the latter, of which he was governor, one of the best places in Europe.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Pierre de Sève (after **Charles le Brun**), *Louis XIV exposes himself to enemy fire in a trench at the siege of Tournai, 21st June 1667* (detail), 17th century.
Oil on canvas, 52.4 x 79.3 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.

Storming of Valenciennes

(17 March, 1677)

Move not unless you see an advantage; use not your troops unless there is something to be gained; fight not unless the position is critical. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 28-29)

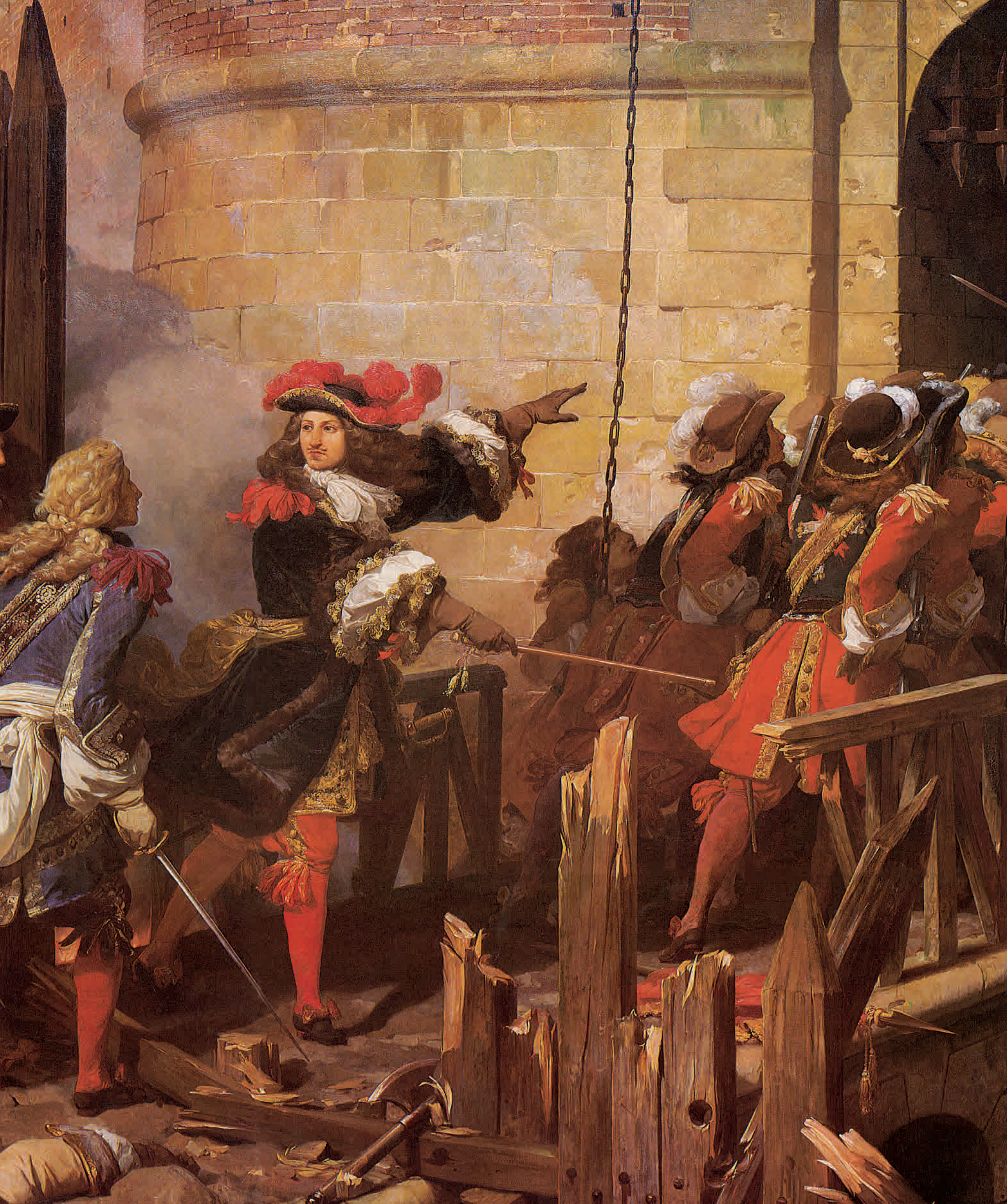
One of the greatest military exploits of Louis XIV was the conquest of Valenciennes. Since the wars which had procured liberty for Holland, the possessors of that city had neglected nothing to render it impregnable. In the first place, it was necessary to gain possession of two half-moons on the right and on the left. Behind these half-moons was a grand crown-work, pallisaded, and surrounded by a fosse intersected by many traverses. After these had been mastered, there was an arm of the Scheld to be crossed; this being done, a fresh work was encountered, called a *pâté*; behind this *pâté* flowed the great stream of the Scheld, deep and rapid, which served as a fosse between the *pâté* and the wall; and this wall was supported by large ramparts. A garrison of nearly four thousand men, a great quantity of munitions of war and provisions, the hatred of the citizens for the French and their affection for their Spanish governor, seemed to promise a long and firm resistance.

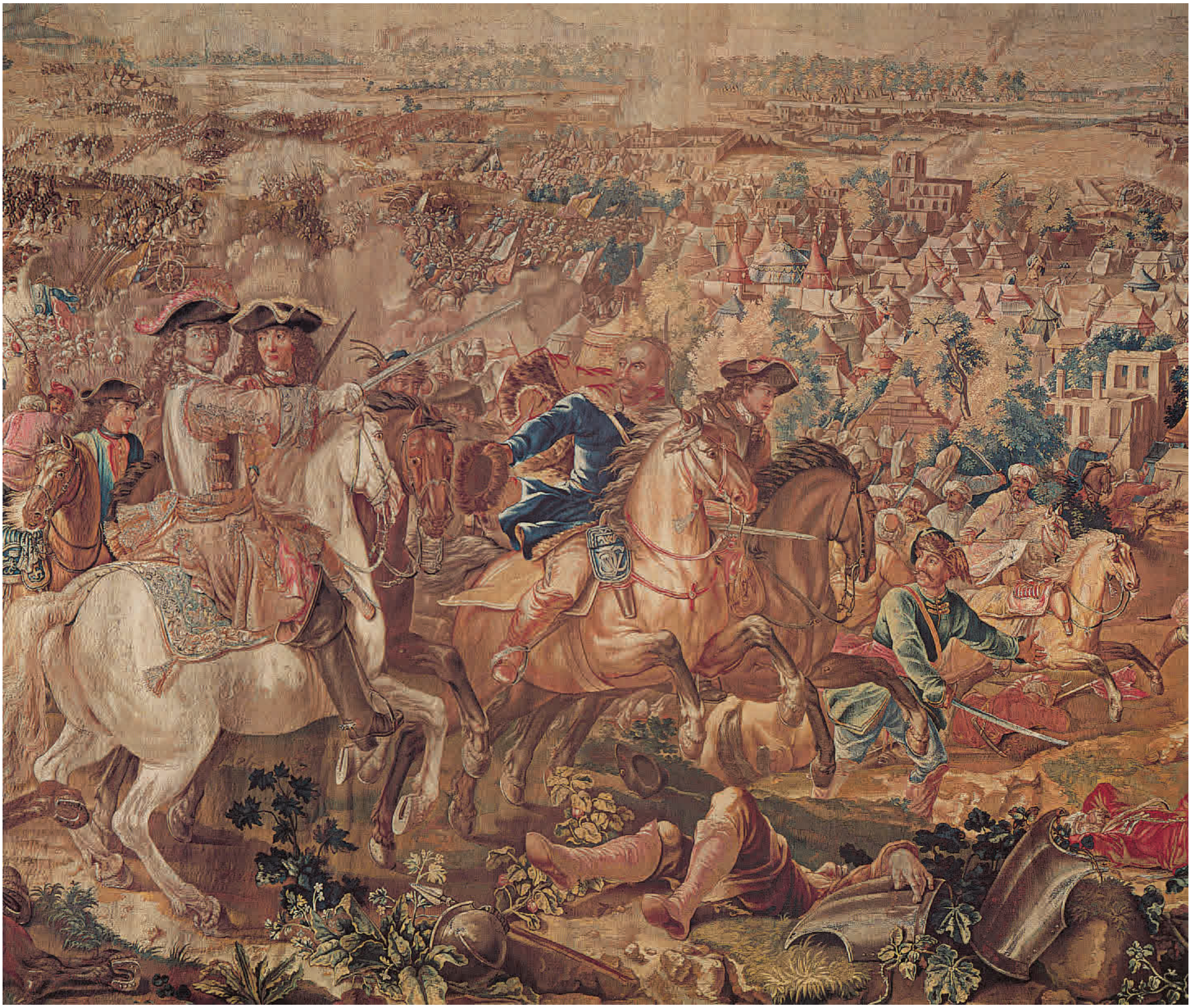
On 9 March, 1677, they opened the trenches. A few days after, the king called a council upon the best means of attacking the outworks with greatest regard to the lives of the soldiers. Vauban proposed to attack them in open day; but all the marshals exclaimed strongly against such a plan. "You wish," said he, "to spare the blood of your soldiers, and this will be best effected by fighting in the daylight. Our object is to surprise the enemy; and they are always in expectation of an attack by night; we shall indeed surprise them when they will be fatigued by watching all night." The king yielded to the reasoning of Vauban in opposition to his minister Louvois and five marshals of France.

On the evening of 16 March, the two companies of Musketeers, a hundred grenadiers of the king's household, a battalion of the guards, and one of the regiments of Picardy, were commanded to be in readiness, and on 17 March, at nine o'clock in the morning, these warriors marched to the attack of the crown-work, after having overcome the two advanced half-moons. Nothing seemed able to resist them; they mounted the entrenchments in all directions and they seized them. But the cannon of the ramparts now threatened destruction to the conquerors. The Grey Musketeers perceived a little door; they broke it in and rushed up this narrow passage and arrived at the top of the *pâté*. They gained the ramparts, and entrenched themselves. They then turned against the city the cannon they found there, and, sheltered from their thunders, descended into the place with the fugitives. They pursued them from entrenchment to entrenchment, from street to street; and they triumphed before the king could have imagined the first work they attacked was taken. The citizens were astonished; the city council assembled. The city was obliged to submit without capitulation. The king made the garrison prisoners of war, and entered Valenciennes, to his own great surprise, as master.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Jean Alaux (**Le Romain**), *The Storming of Valenciennes, 17th March 1677*, 1837.
Oil on canvas, 415 x 465 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.





Battle of Vienna

(12 September, 1683)

He who exercises no forethought but makes light of his opponents is sure to be captured by them. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 9, 41)

Vienna, the beautiful capital of the Empire of Austria, lies on a level plain surrounded by a circle of low hills and traversed by the river Danube. From its geographical position and its political importance, the city has been subjected to several sieges, and has been the scene of many a great conference and treaty of peace between the various European powers. But, for years in its early existence it lay in the track of every horde of barbaric invaders, and after the establishment of Muslim power in Eastern Europe it was incessantly threatened by the Turks. Then, during the Thirty Years' War, the troops of Sweden several times came within alarming proximity to its walls, but without attack. Then came a brief respite, and finally in 1683, nearly forty years after the close of the long and disheartening war in which the empire had been engaged, there came a siege that very nearly wiped it out of existence.

In 1683 the grand vizier, Kara Mustapha, marched with an immense army and powerful train to lay siege to Vienna, and humble it and its master in the dust. Leopold stood not upon the order of his going, but, with his family, court and thousands of inhabitants, he went at once. On 7 July they drew their lines around the city and leisurely proceeded to reduce it. So secure did the vizier feel against counter-attack on his great army that he disdained to fortify his camps. Vienna, with its strong fortifications, its artillery, magazines and public buildings, had been confided to the charge of the Count de Staremberg, a thorough, theoretical soldier. He burned the suburbs outside the walls, so as to clear the way for his guns, and then, with a garrison of perhaps 30,000 effectives, he set about the task of defending the capital against probably five times that many.

In his flight and refuge Leopold [the Emperor of Austria] had appealed for aid from the only man then living who was a terror to the Tartar, John Sobieski, King of Poland. Rich and powerful Austria begged this little monarchy to come to the rescue of the empire and the Christian world; and, at the head of 25,000 veteran troops, Sobieski started. On 7 September the army of Poland had joined that of Germany, and the united forces were now 74,000 strong. Then, on 9 September, the army pushed forward to force their way over the broken and rugged heights that intervened between them and Vienna, dragging their artillery with them. The march had been most tortuous and difficult; the defines were steep, crooked and narrow, and, had the grand vizier possessed the first elements of military science, he would have seized the passes, where a few hundred determined men could have beaten back thousands; but, in stupid over-confidence, he allowed them to come on, and, at dawn on the morning of 12 September, the army of Sobieski, then 70,000 strong, swept down upon him. By three o'clock in the afternoon the whole Muslim army, abandoning its vast encampment, was in disorderly flight eastward down the valley of the Danube, pursued and sabred by the Polish cavalry. The siege of Vienna was raised in good earnest.

(adapted from: *Famous and decisive battles of the world* by C. King)

Tapestry showing the relief of Vienna, September 12th, 1683 (detail), 1st quarter of the 18th century.
Wool and silk, 430 x 805 cm.
Kunstkammer, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Battle of Leuze

(18/19 September, 1691)

If the enemy is taking his ease, he can harass him; if well supplied with food, he can starve him out; if quietly encamped, he can force him to move. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 6, 4)

After the taking of Mons, and the departure of King Louis XIV, Marshal Luxembourg gave his troops some rest; Louvois had obliged him to furnish several detachments, which had weakened him so much that he contented himself with watching the army of King William without dreaming of attacking it. He took up his quarters on the side of Ninove; Villars gives us to understand that he chose the position more as an epicurean than a general. "The army," he says, "was well encamped, grain and forage in abundance, all his troops in barracks, the general in a position to have the best cheer in the world, fowls from Campine, veal from Gand, oysters from England, nothing was wanting." But he narrowly escaped a surprise. The allies having advanced on the side of Aeth, he was obliged to retire suddenly towards L'Escaut. He took his revenge two days after; he charged them with part of his cavalry when, on the retreat, they were busy crossing the little stream of Cattoire. This was the Battle of Leuze, glorious for the royal troops, since eighteen squadrons vanquished nearly fifty of the enemy. The losses were, however, pretty equal; and the glory was the only advantage reaped by the victor.

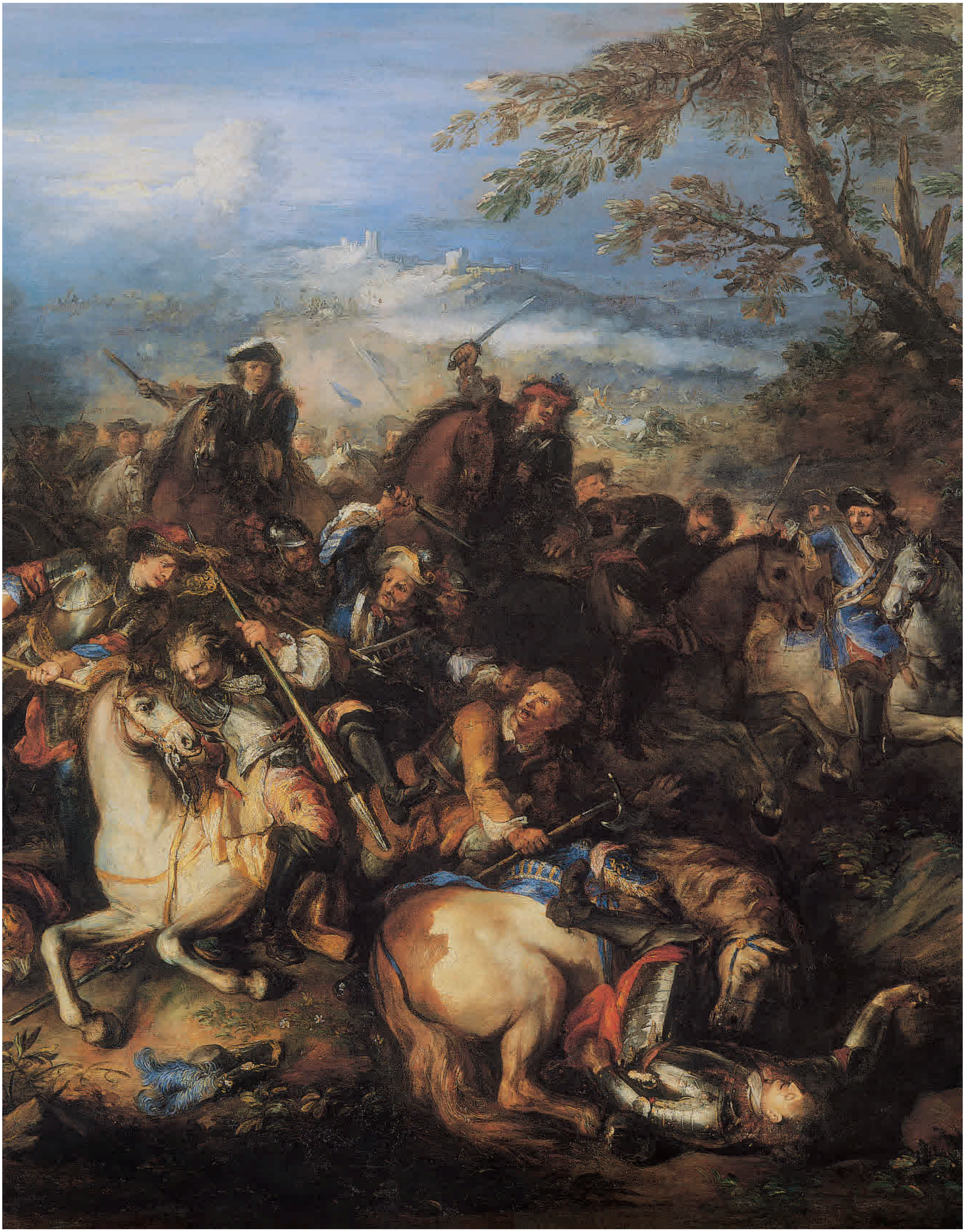
(adapted from: "The Siege of Mons and the Death of Louvois"
in: *Half-hours with the Best French Authors* by J. Sismondi)

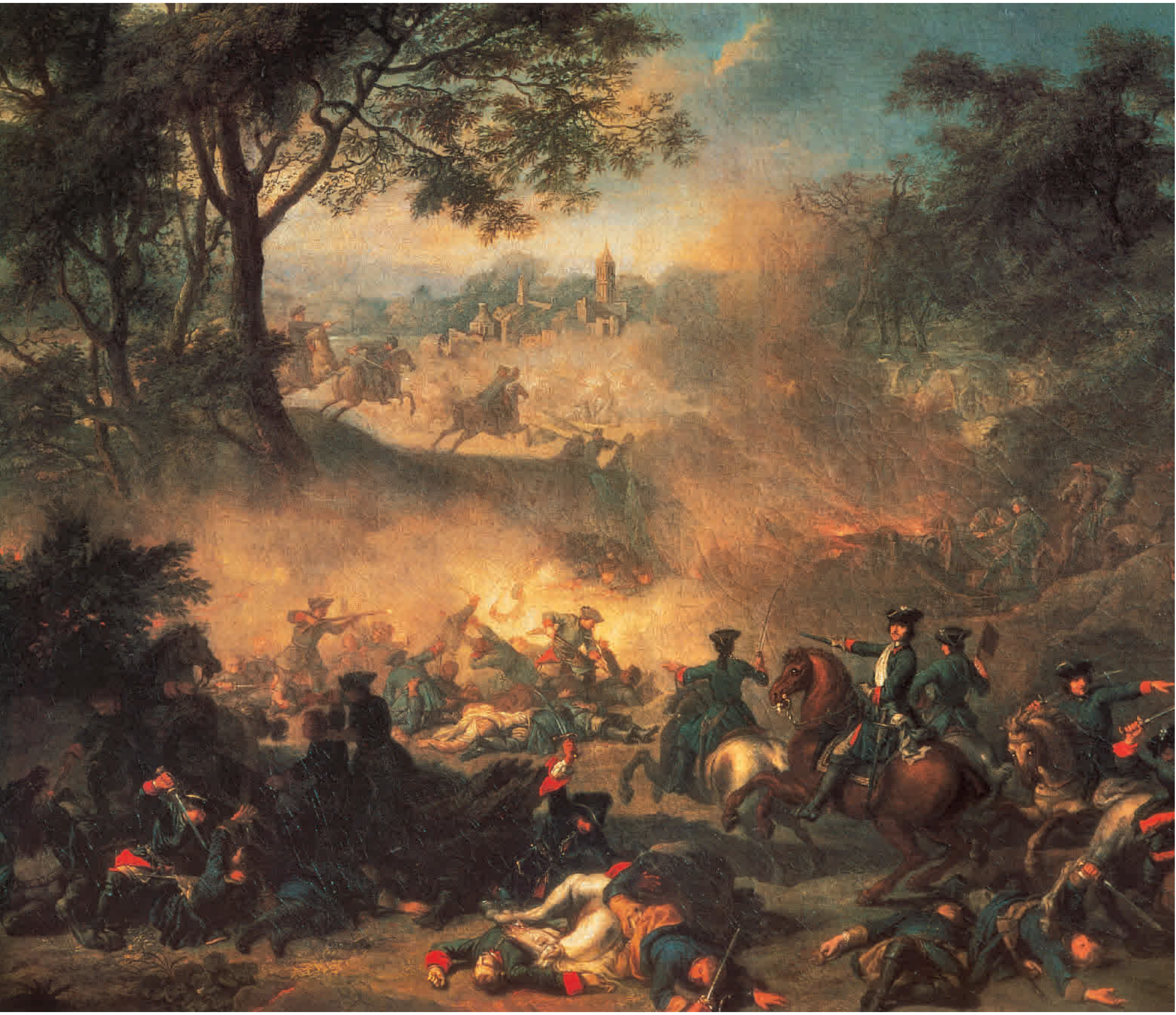
Leuze is town in the Austrian Netherlands [now Belgium], and province of Hainault, fourteen miles from Mons, near Liège. In the year 1691, the French drove all before them. After the taking of Mons, the French having gained so important a point, thought only of acting upon the defensive for the rest of the campaign in Flanders.

The Confederates, under King William, were indeed somewhat superior to them in point of infantry, but in cavalry the French were stronger. King William did all he could to bring Luxembourg to a battle, by several marches and countermarches, as well as the feints he made of retaking Mons; yet all was ineffectual; for Luxembourg as industriously avoided fighting, resolving to give no opportunity. The king, after he had first blown up the fortifications of Beaumont, marched his army towards Aeth, and leaving the command to Prince Waldeck, he retired to consider the farther operations of the war. Prince Waldeck continued some time about Aeth; but as he was decamping from Leuze, on 19 September, the Duke of Luxembourg thought it a fair opportunity to catch the Prince unawares from behind, as he was approaching towards Benair and Cambrun, which he did by a forced march, with a great cavalry – the best in France. When the Prince found out, he could scarce credit it. But the first line of the Confederates was hardly drawn up, before it was charged by the French king's household troops, while the second line was forming of such troops as were ordered to pass the river with all convenient speed. The French horse being more numerous, they had some advantage for a short time over the Allies, who being sustained by the infantry, though their first and second line were disordered, rallied again, and after a long dispute, the French quitted their enterprise, sufficiently contented with having harassed the Prince's march.

(adapted from: *The Field of Mars*)

Joseph Parrocel, *Fighting at Leuze,*
18th September 1691, 4th quarter of the 17th century.
Oil on canvas, 219 x 230 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.





Battle of Poltava

(8 July, 1709)

When you penetrate deeply into a country, it is serious ground. On serious ground, I would try to ensure a continuous stream of supplies. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 44/49)

Europe was amazed at the victory of Charles XII at Narva. The man who took the most practical and philosophical view of the matter was Peter the Great. "These Swedes," said he, "will teach us to fight," and, wisely determining to avoid meeting his confident young adversary in the field, until his army was in condition to make its numbers felt, the Tsar of Russia busied himself in reorganising and instructing his land forces. For this purpose he induced many German officers to come to Russia, as instructors and drill-masters. From the day of Narva, Peter the Great was bending all his energies to the task of putting a stop to the victorious career of Charles XII. The unbroken series of victories that had attended him caused the King of Sweden to believe that within a year he could conquer Russia. So confident was he that he was predestined to be a second Alexander the Great; he was dreaming of the conquest of the world.

And now, in September 1707, with a veteran army of 43,000 men, every regiment filled to its maximum, Charles XII marched eastward from Saxony, bent on the overthrow of Peter the Great. At the earliest break of spring, now with but the skeleton of his once powerful army, with a mere 20,000 ragged and famishing men, the mad young monarch resumed his eastward march, and, towards the end of May, arrived before the walls of Pultowa, a little city on the river Vorskla, at the eastern end of the Ukraine. A large magazine and supply depot had here been established by the tsar, and could Charles succeed in taking it, not only would he be able to equip and feed his men, but the way to Moscow would be open. Prince Menzikoff, with a formidable body of Cossack cavalry, was hovering about his flanks, and Peter the Great with a large army was hastening to the rescue. The lucky star of Sweden was setting in fire and blood.

It was the evening of 7 July, and the tidings that the Tsar's entire army was advancing upon him determined him to meet him in battle at daybreak. And now, early on the morning of 8 July, the two rival monarchs confronted each other. But the Russian army was no longer the disorderly, undisciplined mob he had chased like sheep at Narva. Already had Peter's efforts prevailed. Already had Sweden taught Russia how to fight. All King Charles' efforts, all his bravery were vain. Mown down by the incessant discharges of the Russian guns, swept by the fire of Russian musketry, the Swedes were being slowly annihilated, and, at last, as the enemy advanced in rapid charge, the first line reeled back upon the second, and the second gave way. In ten minutes more the remnant of the grand army of Sweden, that eight years before was the most disciplined and courageous of Europe, was in full flight. The king raged, stormed, scorned to fly, but General Poniatowski caused him to be lifted on a horse, and with a small escort, despite his struggles and protestations, led him from the field. All was over with the army of Sweden. Never was victory more decisive. Charles XII was allowed to flee, with only 1,500 followers.

(adapted from: *Famous and decisive battles of the world* by C. King)

Jean-Marc Nattier, *The Battle of Poltava*, 1717.
Oil on canvas, 90 × 112 cm.
Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

Battle of Denain

(24 July, 1712)

In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign. Having collected an army and concentrated his forces, he must blend and harmonise the different elements thereof before pitching his camp. After that, comes tactical manoeuvring, than which there is nothing more difficult. The difficulty of tactical manoeuvring consists in turning the devious into the direct, and misfortune into gain.

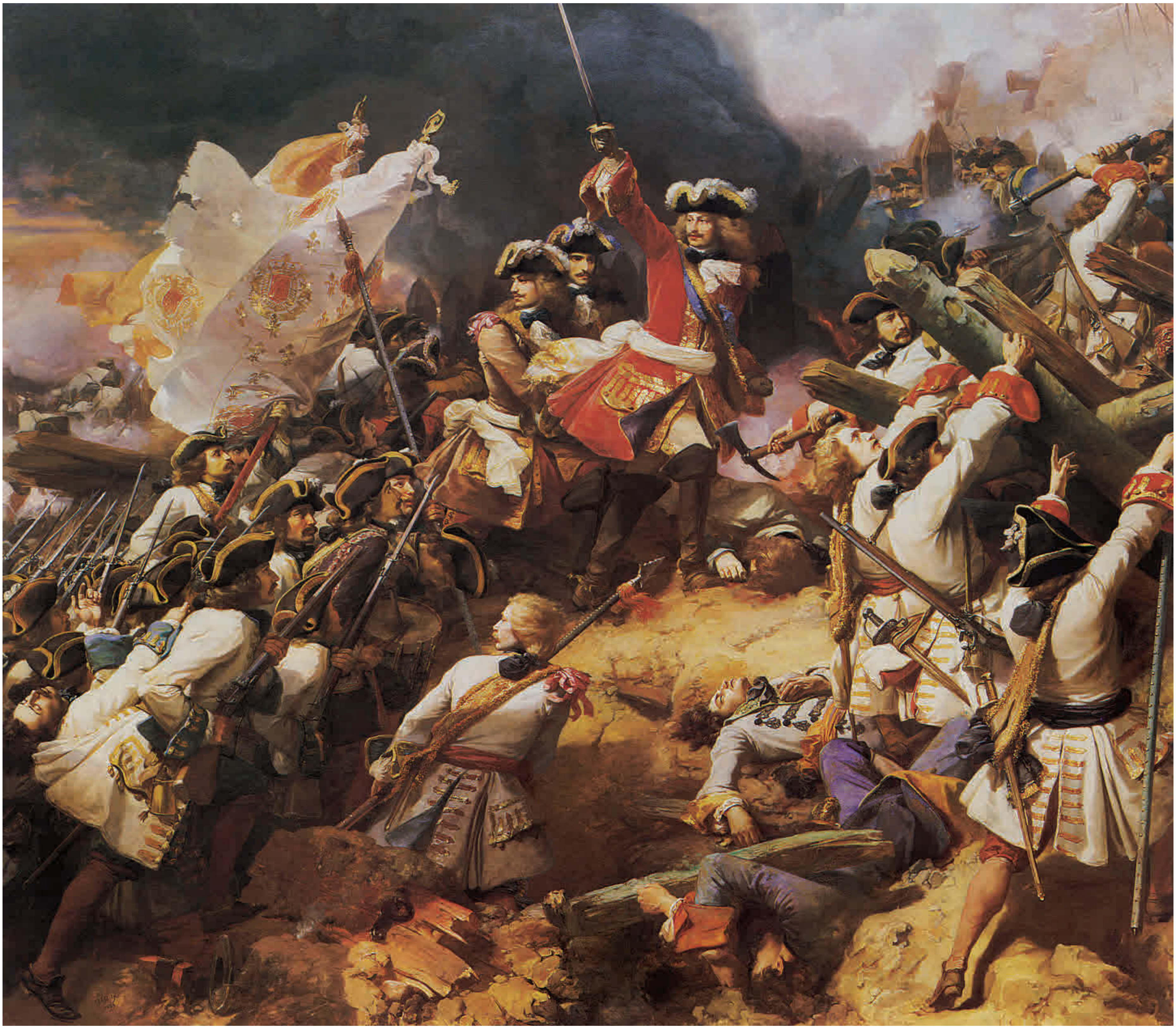
Thus, to take a long and circuitous route, after enticing the enemy out of the way, and though starting after him, to contrive to reach the goal before him, shows knowledge of the artifice of DEVIATION. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 7, 1-4)

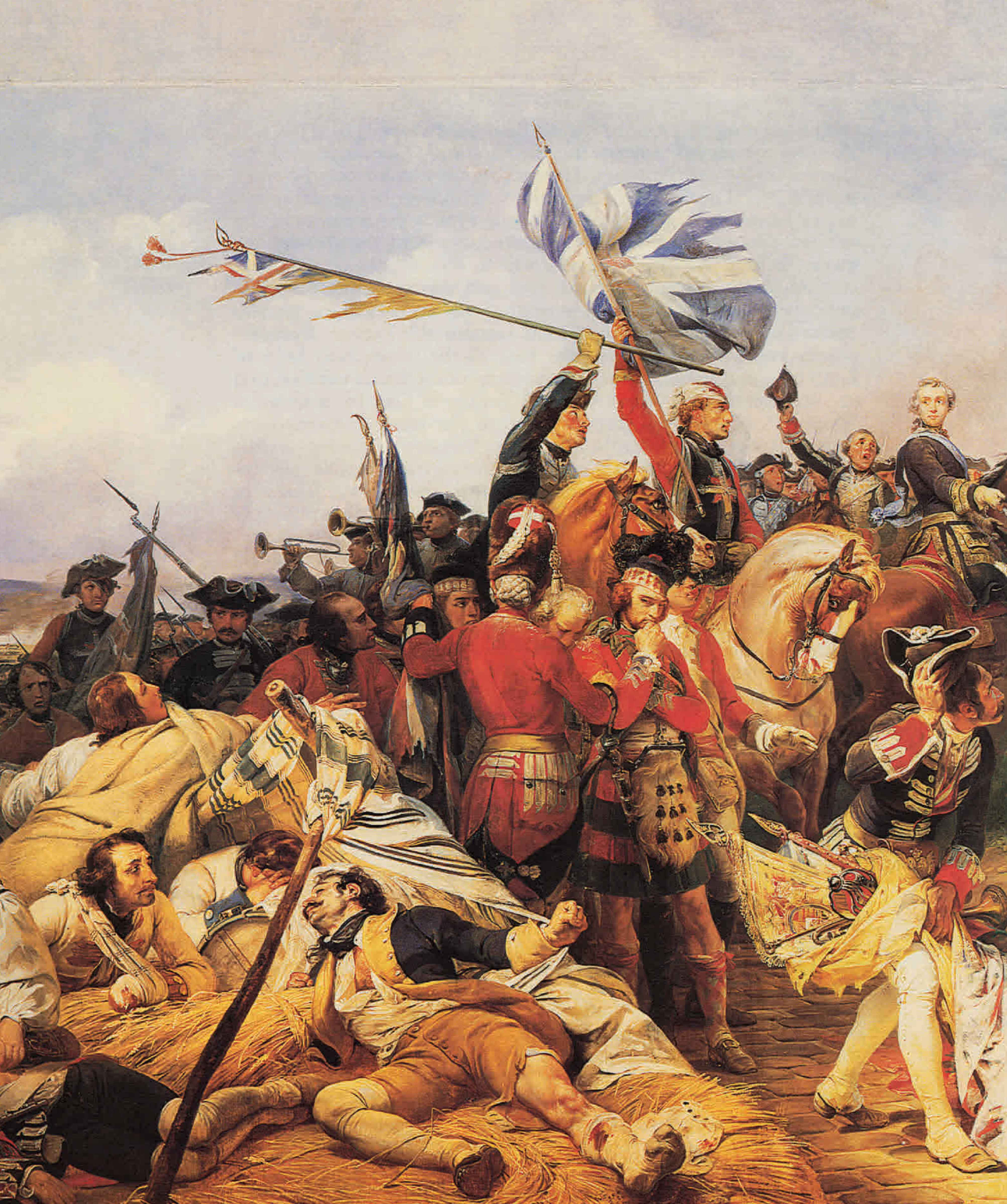
We have before alluded to the War of the Spanish Succession, and the fatal consequences which its disastrous conduct brought upon France – disasters that only found their termination in the ruin of the country, the expatriation of its nobility, and the murder of its king by a revolutionary tribunal nearly three-quarters of a century afterwards – so long does the wave of great events extend its influence until the impulse be finally expended. This Spanish war, in which the whole of continental Europe fought in coalition against Louis XIV, lasted ten years. England, fatigued with useless struggles, and desirous of securing the acknowledgment of its new monarchical settlement in the succession of the House of Hanover, was about to agree to a suspension of arms; but the Emperor Charles of Germany, and Prince Eugene of Savoy, his lieutenant-general, refused to accede to any such proposal. Prince Eugene, at this time, had a magnificent army of 100,000 men in Flanders; had taken Quesnoy; and was besieging Landrecies, on his lines before which he raised up a direction-post, bearing upon it the words, "The way to Paris." Detachments of his troops made their way even as far as Rheims, and some of his officers had actually threatened to beat up the quarters of the French king at Versailles.

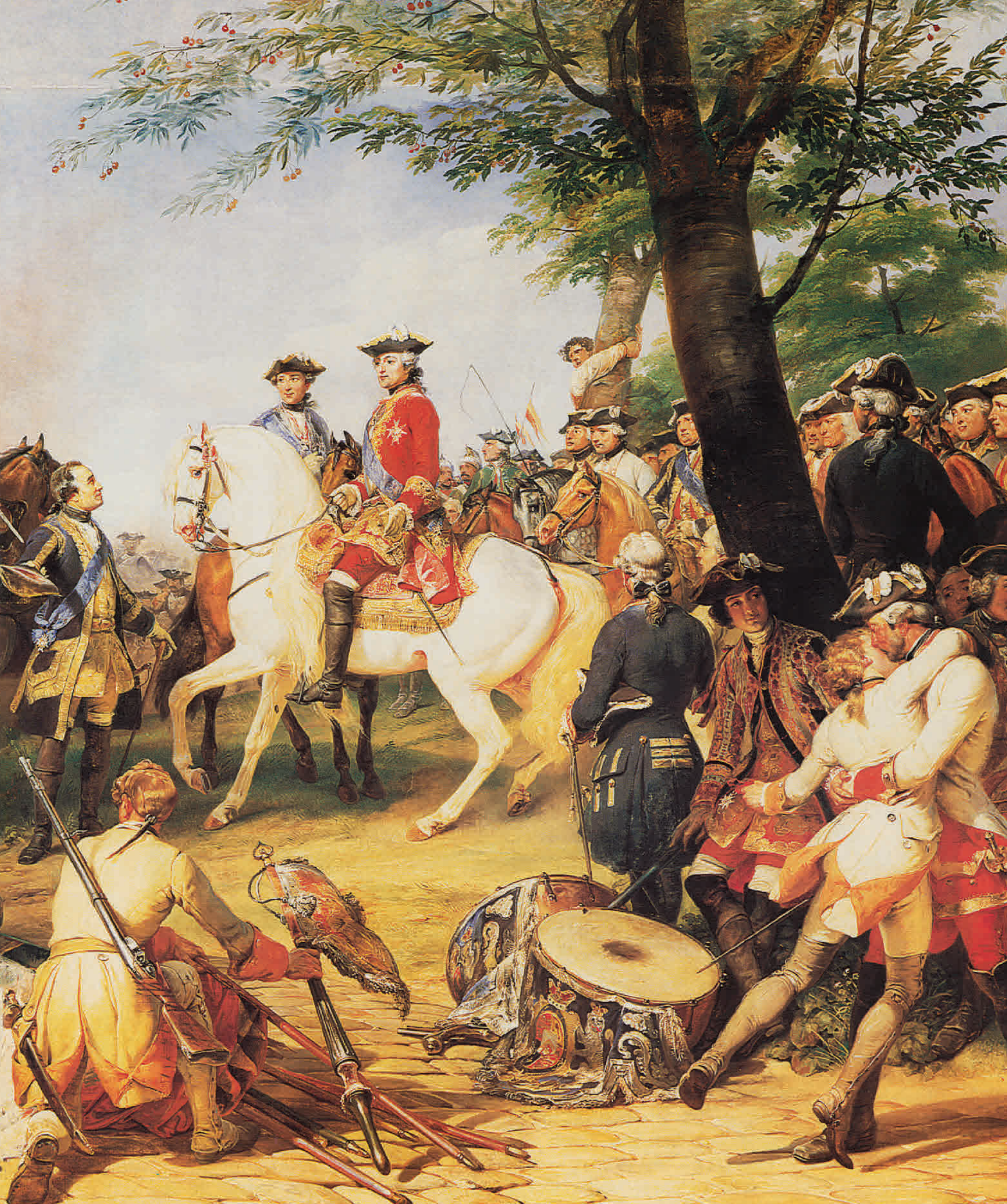
Just at this period, Louis XIV, now in his sixty-fourth year, an aged man – grand, indeed, but by no means venerable – was, In spite of his crown, his power, and his grandeur, plunged in the deepest affliction. His only son, the Dauphin of France, the Duke of Bourgogne, the Dauphin's eldest son, as well as the Duchess of Bourgogne, and the eldest of her surviving children, had just died close upon each other. It was at this sad moment that Louis XIV, rising above either fortune, said to Marshal Villars: "To you I confide my army, our last hope. If fortune should be against you, I will go to Peronne or St Quentin" (strongly fortified towns), collect all the troops I have, and make a last effort in conjunction with you. We will perish together, or save the State." The fortunate audacity of Villars preserved France from this extremity; he deceived Eugene by a false attack on Landrecies, and then marched in all haste upon Denain, overwhelmed one division of the enemy, destroyed first seventeen battalions, then twenty-three more, raised the lines of the pretended "Way to Paris," took, or retook, five towns, and obliged Prince Eugene to withdraw from the northern frontier of France. A success so brilliant confounded the coallition army, and promptly brought about a general peace.

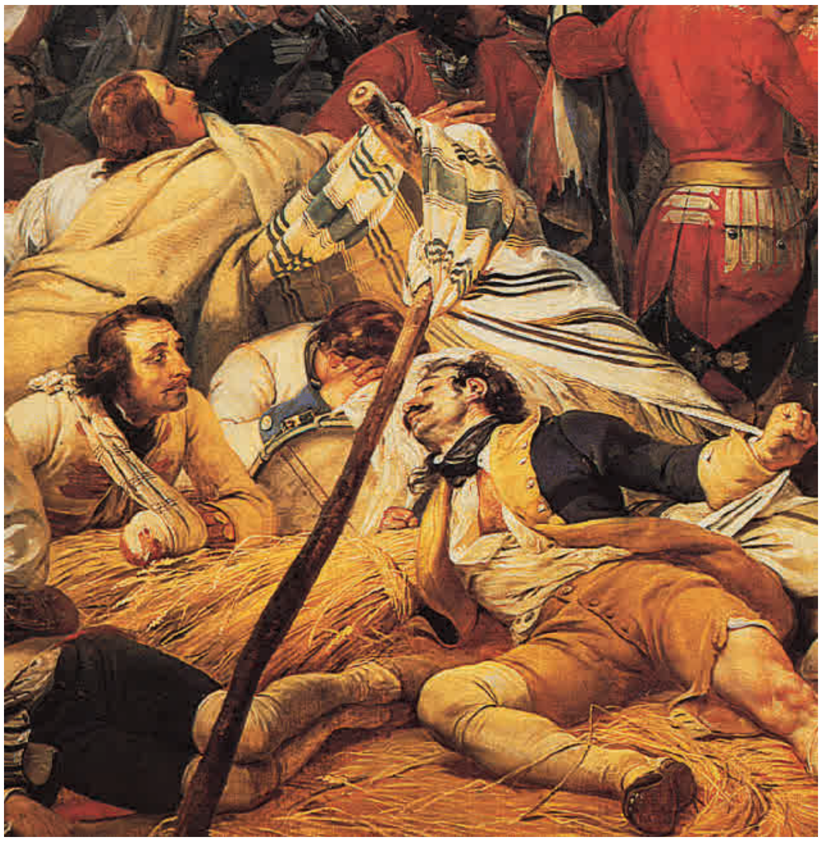
(adapted from: *The Battle and the Breeze. Being Stories of Adventures by Land and Sea* by R.M. Ballantyne)

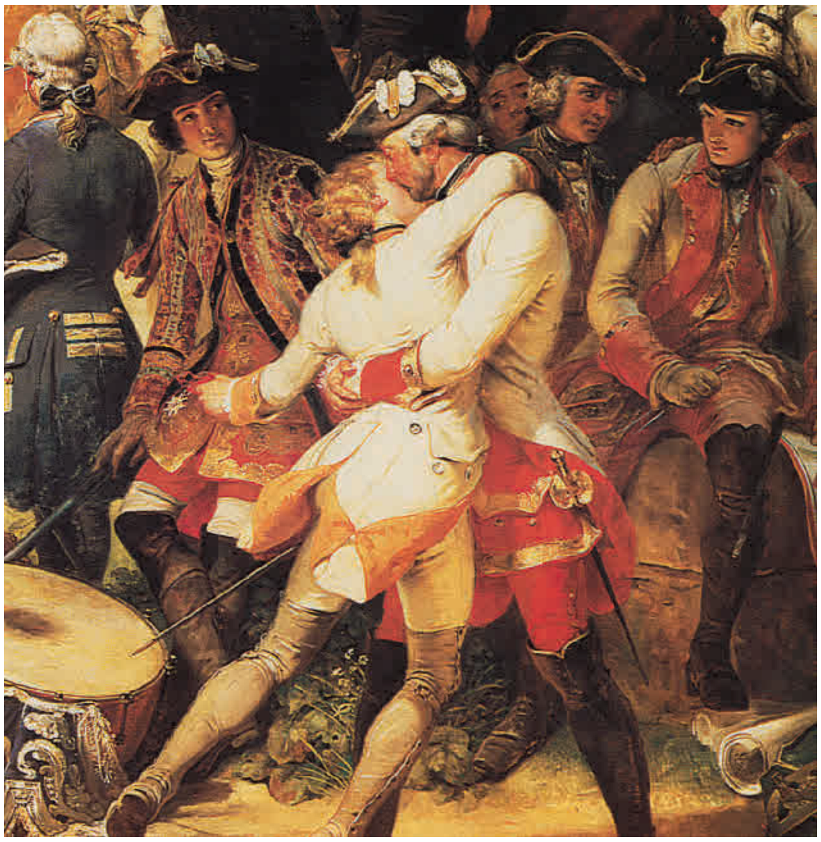
Jean Alaux (**Le Romain**), *Battle of Denain, 24th July 1712*, 1839.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 543 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.











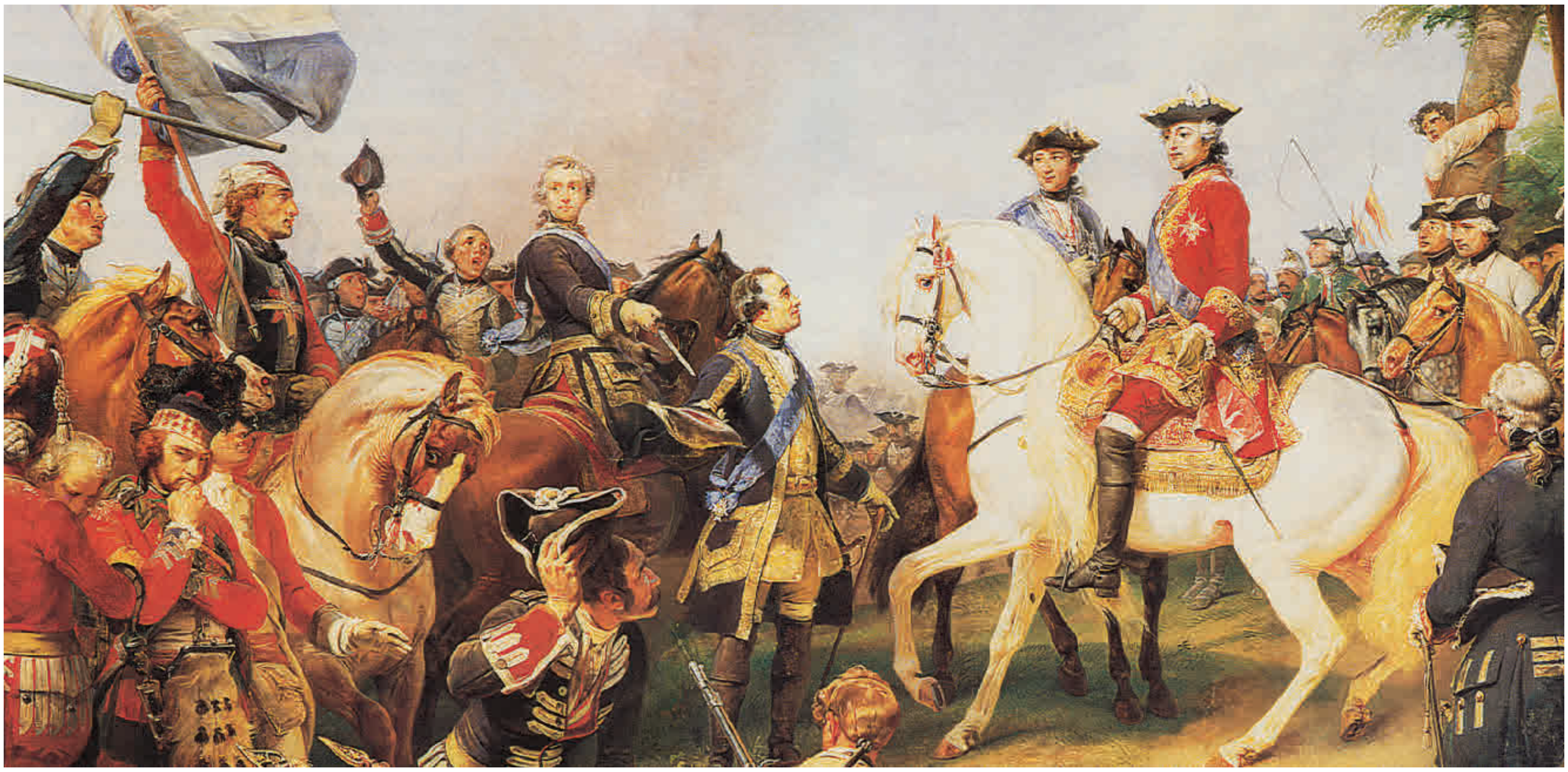
Battle of Fontenoy

(11 May, 1745)

If in training soldiers commands are habitually enforced, the army will be well-disciplined; if not, its discipline will be bad. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 9, 44)

The Battle of Fontenoy was fought on 30 April, 1745, between the French army, under Count Saxe, and the allied armies of England, Hanover, Holland, and Austria, under the Duke of Cumberland. Fontenoy is in Belgium, in the province of Hainaut, five miles south-east of Tournay. The French had resolved upon a most strenuous effort to defeat the plans of the allies in the Netherlands.

The allies began the attack at two o'clock in the morning. Through the darkness of night the stout English troops pressed forward up the steep acclivity, and attacked the French with an ardour which, for a time, bore down all opposition. The French fought with the utmost gallantry; Count Saxe, who was at that time sick of the disorder of which he afterward died, was carried about to all the posts in a fitter, and with the utmost coolness and intrepidity directed the movements of his troops, praising the brave, and encouraging the faint-hearted. The battle raged furiously. A column of the English, without any commander, but by mere mechanical courage, advanced upon the enemy's lines, which opening formed an avenue on each side to receive them. They had no sooner entered than the French artillery, on three sides, began to play upon them with terrible effect. The ground was literally covered with the dead and dying. At length the English were obliged to retreat, at about three o'clock in the afternoon. This was one of the most bloody battles that had been fought in this age: the allies left on the field of battle 12,000 men; and the French lost nearly an equal number.

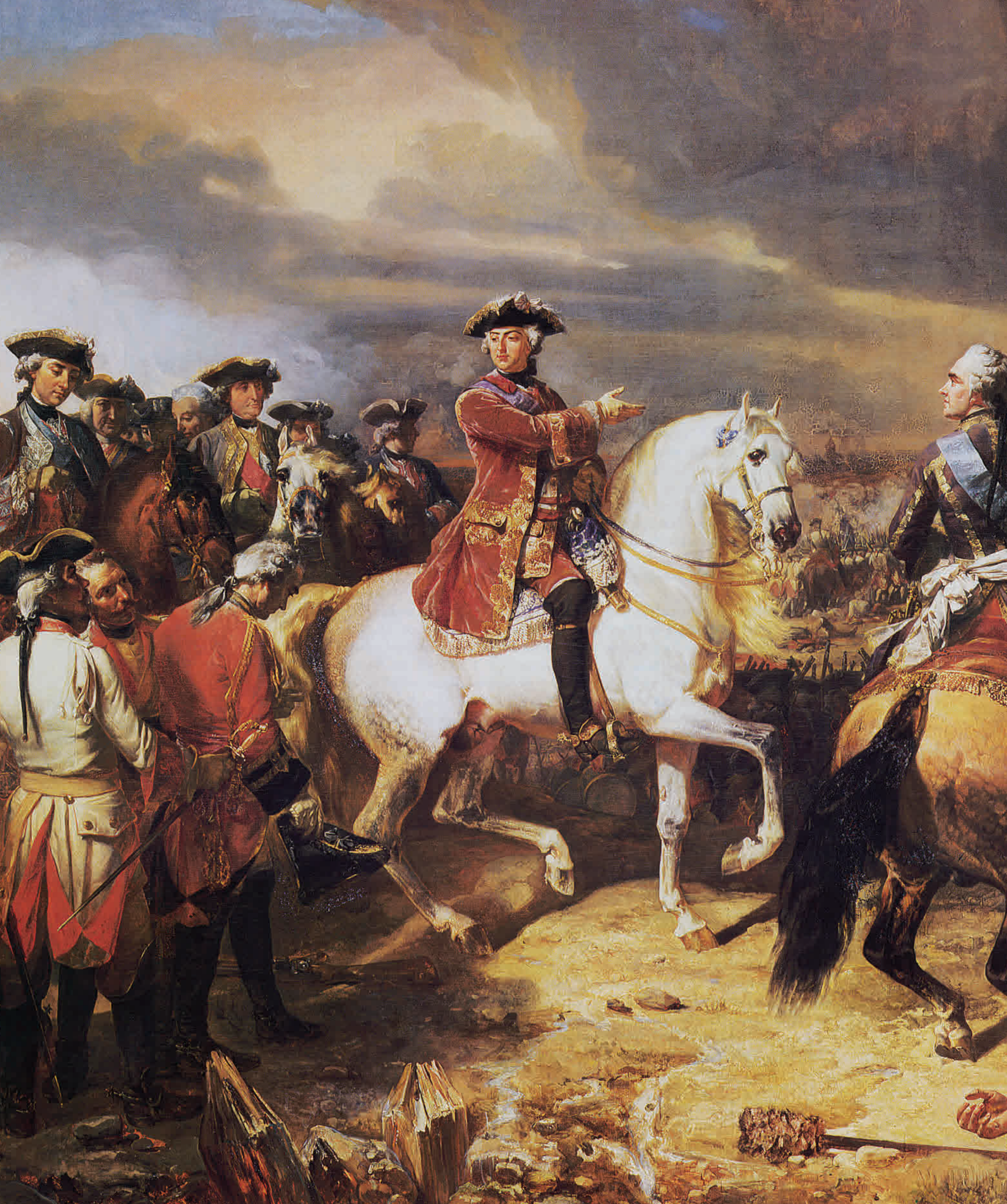


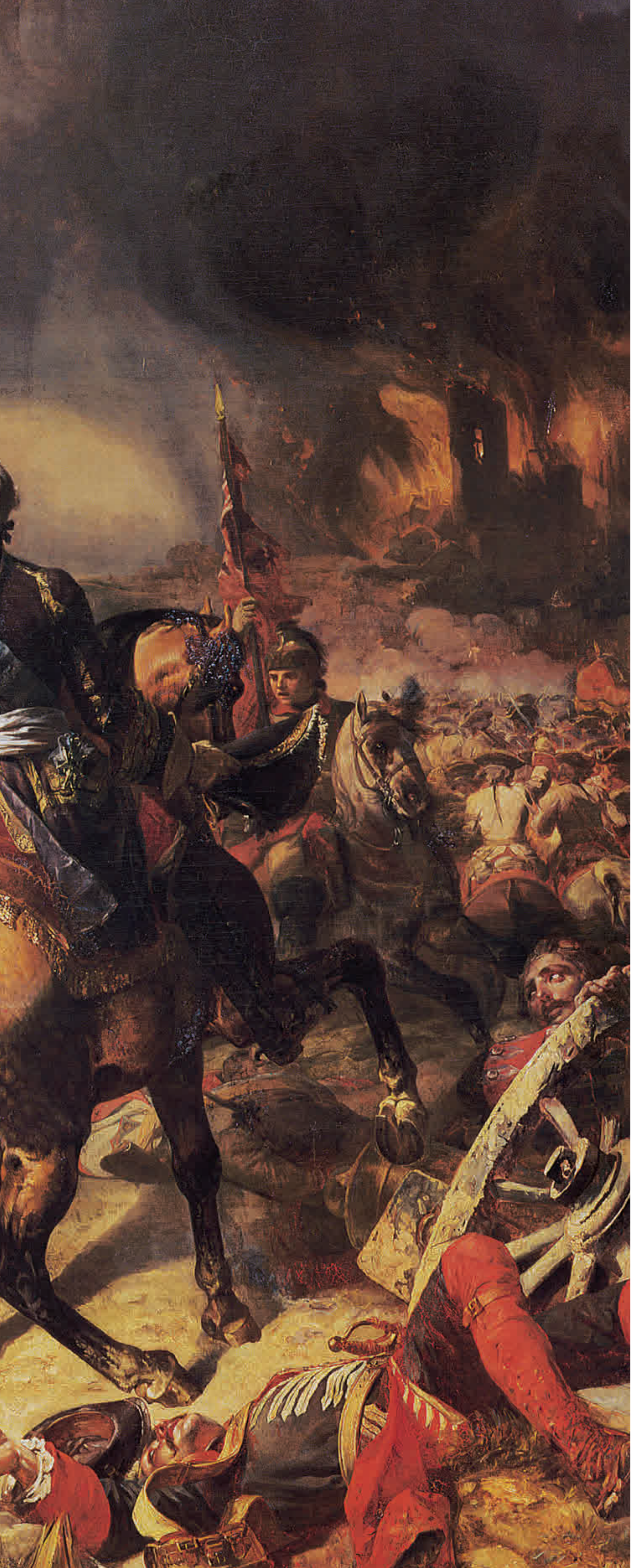
This blow, by which Tournay was taken by the French, gave them such a manifest superiority, during all the rest of the campaign, that they kept the fruits of their victory during the continuance of the war.

In connection with this battle we can not forbear giving the following anecdote, taken from a French work, entitled l'Histoire des chiens célèbres, which, however remarkable, is said to be well attested: "Mustapha, a strong and active greyhound, belonging to a captain of artillery, raised from his birth in the midst of camps, always accompanied his master, and exhibited no alarm in the midst of battle. In the hottest engagement he remained near the cannon to which his master was attached, and carried the match in his mouth. At the memorable battle of Fontenoy, the master of Mustapha received a mortal wound. Seeing his master extended lifeless and bleeding upon the ground, the dog became desperate and howled piteously. Just at that moment a body of French soldiers were advancing to gain possession of the piece, which was still aimed at them, from the top of a small rising ground. As if with a view to avenge his master's death, Mustapha seized the lighted match and applied it to the cannon loaded with case-shot! Seventy men fell on the spot, and the remainder took to flight! After this bold stroke the dog lay down sadly near the dead body of his master and remained there twenty-two hours, without food. He was at length, with difficulty removed, by the comrades of the deceased. This gallant greyhound was afterward presented to George II who had him taken care of as a brave and faithful public servant."

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Horace Vernet, *The Battle of Fontenoy, 11th May 1745*, 1828.
Oil on canvas, 510 x 975 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. (pp. 150-151, 152, 153)





Battle of Lauffeld

(2 July, 1747)

Hence in the wise leader's plans, considerations of advantage and of disadvantage will be blended together. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 8, 7)

It was this disunion in the allied army that caused it a check on 2 July, at the village of Lauffeld, in front of Maastricht. The Dutch, in the centre, gave way and fled; the Austrians, on the right, under Marshal Batthyány, would not move from their fortified position; so that the entire brunt of the battle fell upon the British, on the left. Assailed by the whole French army, which was animated by the presence of Louis, and directed by the genius of De Saxe, the Duke of Cumberland could not long maintain his ground: he effected his retreat, however, in good order, leading the troops to a new and strong position behind the Meuse. They lost four standards; but despite this set-back, they captured six. The number of killed and wounded, on both sides, was great, nearly equal. Marshal de Saxe afterwards admitted that it had cost him 8,000 infantrymen and 1,000 cavalrymen. "The great misfortune of our position," writes the Duke of Cumberland, "was that our right wing was so strongly posted, that they could neither be attacked nor make a diversion; for I am assured that Marshal Batthyány would have done all in his power, to sustain me, or attack the enemy." Both commanders showed high personal gallantry in the foremost ranks; the Marshal being once nearly taken prisoner, and the duke also once mixed with a squadron of French on horseback. The English cavalry suffered severely from their own ardour; they broke at first whatever stood before them; but hurrying on too far, were outflanked by columns on foot, when their body was with great slaughter driven back, and their chief, Sir John Ligonier, taken.

(adapted from: *The History of England from the Peace of Utrecht to the Peace of Versailles* by P.H. Stanhope)

Auguste Couder, *Battle of Lawfeld, 2nd July 1747,* 1836.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 543 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon,
Versailles.

Battle of Bunker Hill

(17 June, 1775)

Soldiers, when in desperate straits, lose the sense of fear. If there is no place of refuge, they will stand firm. If they are in hostile country, they will show a stubborn front. If there is no help for it, they will fight hard. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 24)

Across the Charles River north from Boston, on a peninsula, lay the village of Charlestown, and rising behind it was Breed's Hill, about seventy-four feet high, extending northeastward to the higher elevation of Bunker Hill. In the dark, the American force of twelve hundred men under Colonel Prescott marched to this neck of land and then advanced half a mile southward to Breed's Hill. Prescott was an old campaigner of the Seven Years' War; he had six cannons, and his troops were commanded by experienced officers. Israel Putnam was skilful in irregular frontier fighting, and Nathanael Greene, destined to prove himself the best man in the American army next to Washington himself, could furnish sage military counsel derived from much thought and reading.

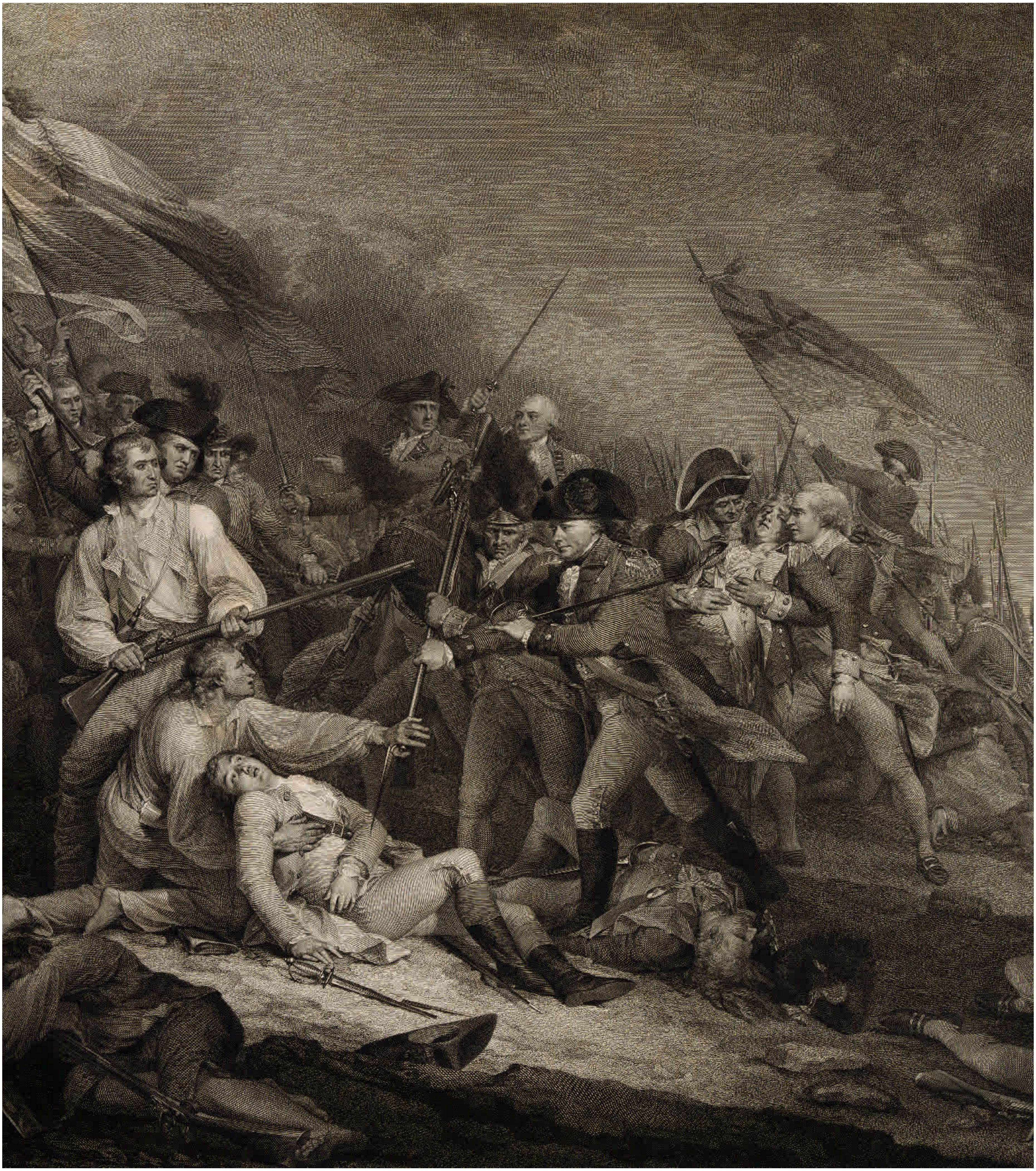
Thus it happened that on the morning of 17 June General Gage in Boston awoke to a surprise. Now he saw the American force on Breed's Hill throwing up a defiant and menacing redoubt and entrenchments. Gage did not hesitate. The bold aggressors must be driven away at once. He detailed for the enterprise William Howe, the officer destined soon to be his successor in the command at Boston. Howe was a brave and experienced soldier. Gage gave him in all some twenty-five hundred men, and, at about two in the afternoon, this force was landed at Charlestown.

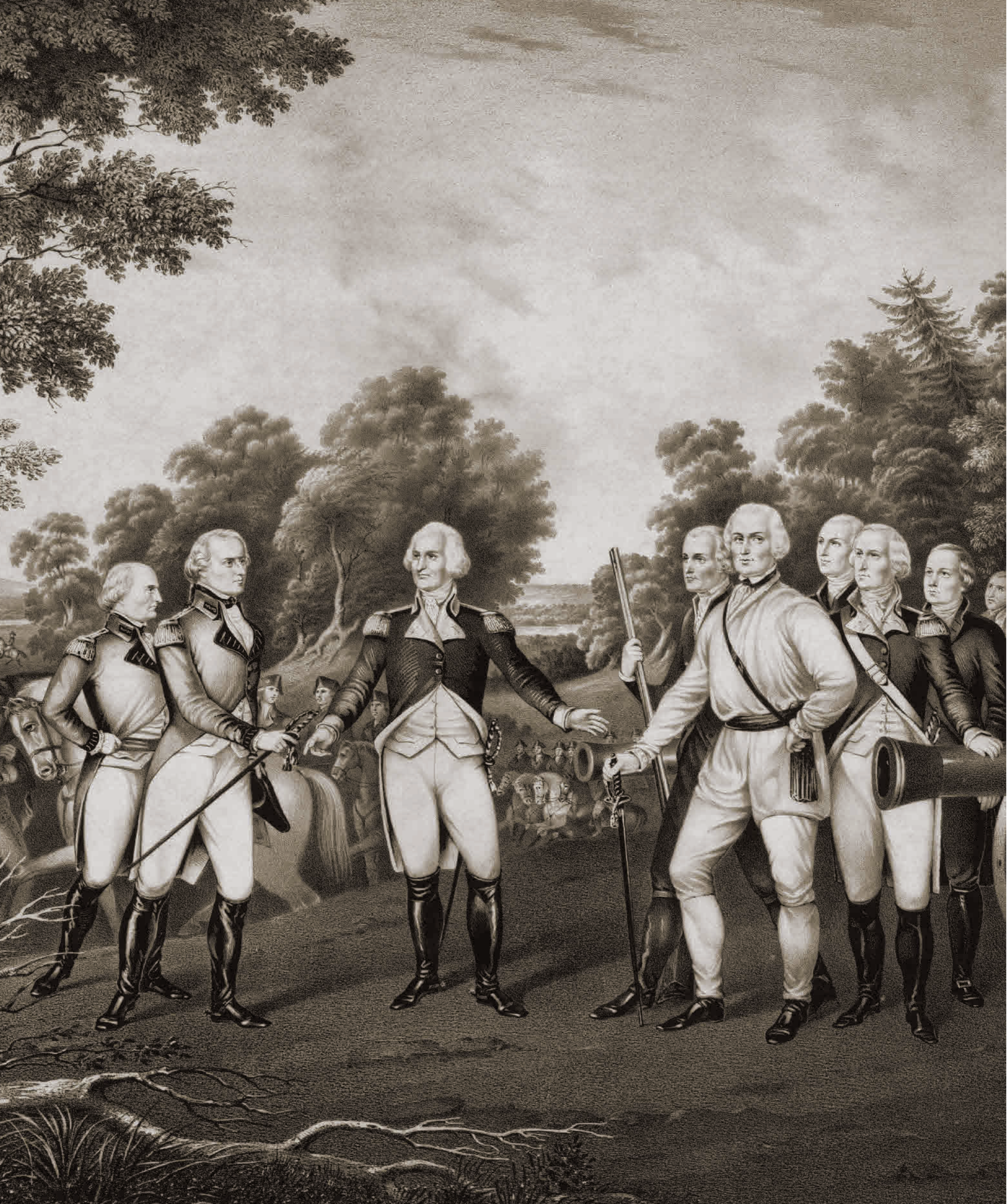
The little town was soon aflame and the smoke helped to conceal Howe's movements. Straight up Breed's Hill they marched wading through long grass sometimes to their knees and throwing down the fences on the hillside. The British knew that raw troops were likely to scatter their fire on a foe still out of range and they counted on a rapid bayonet charge against men helpless with empty rifles. This expectation was disappointed. The Americans had in front of them a barricade and Israel Putnam was there, threatening dire things to anyone who should fire before he could see the whites of the eyes of the advancing soldiery. As the British came on there was a terrific discharge of musketry at twenty yards, repeated again and again as they either halted or drew back.

The slaughter was terrible. British officers hardened in war declared long afterward that they had never seen carnage like that of this fight. The American riflemen had been told to aim especially at the British officers, easily known by their uniforms, and one rifleman is said to have shot twenty officers before he was himself killed. When the first attack by the British was checked they retired; but, with dogged resolve, they re-formed and again charged up the hill, only a second time to be driven back. They wavered; and on the third British charge, having exhausted their ammunition, they fled from the hill in confusion back to the narrow neck of land half a mile away, swept now by a British floating battery. General Burgoyne wrote that, in the third attack, the discipline and courage of the British private soldiers also broke down and that when the redoubt was carried the officers of some corps were almost alone. The British stood victorious at Bunker Hill. It was, however, a costly victory. More than a thousand men, nearly half of the attacking force, had fallen, with an undue proportion of officers.

(adapted from: *Washington and his Comrades in Arms: A Chronicle of the War of Independence* by G. Wrong)

After **John Trumbull**, *The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker Hill* (detail).
Lithograph.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.





Battles of Saratoga

(19 September and 7 October, 1777)

The best laid plans of mice and men / Often go awry [paraphrased] (Robert Burns, *To a Mouse, on Turning Her Up in Her Nest with the Plough*)

The surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga, though not, perhaps, properly classed among battles, is, nevertheless, properly classed among events momentous in their influence upon the destinies of nations. Looking upon the American Revolution as a whole and from a dispassionate distance, Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga is seen to be the fateful turning of the tide which rolled from crest-wave English victory back to slow but sure English discomfiture and ultimate defeat.

As a result of the Colonial victory at Saratoga came recognition of the Independent United States of America, first from France, later from Spain, and later still from Holland. Confidence was established; untried troops had stood breast to breast against veterans of the British army, against skilled Grenadiers, and these untried troops had won; they had caused the proud British general to retreat from place to place, they had surrounded him at last on Saratoga Heights and forced him to capitulate. The independence of the thirteen original states and all evolutionary Republican America lay potential in the victory of Generals Gates and Arnold over Burgoyne and his veterans at Saratoga.

Burgoyne's plan was good; and had not General St Leger failed to capture Fort Stanwix and then to proceed along the Mohawk to its confluence with the Hudson and there join his force to that of Burgoyne; and had not General Baum failed to win the Battle of Bennington and so secure the magazines of provisions so sorely needed by the British army; and had not Lord Howe considered it more advantageous to cross over to the Delaware and attack Philadelphia, rather than remain at New York ready for emergency; and had not General Clinton been retarded in his victorious advance up from Albany; if all, or perhaps any one of these conditions had been the reverse of what they were, why, history might be the reverse of what it is.

On 13 October, 1777, General Burgoyne, besieged by overpowering numbers on the heights of Saratoga and seeing that his array was facing disease and famine, and being unable to establish communication either with Lord Howe or with General Clinton – opened negotiations with General Gates as to conditions of surrender. At first General Gates demanded that the royal army should surrender themselves prisoners of war. Burgoyne refused. It was later agreed upon that "the troops under General Burgoyne were to march out of their camp with the honours of war, and the artillery – of the entrenchments, to the verge of the river, where the arms and the artillery were to be left. The arms to be piled by word of command from their own officers. A free passage was to be granted to the army under Lieutenant General Burgoyne to Great Britain upon condition of not serving again in North America during the present contest." These conditions having been formally accepted, an army of weak and wounded men laboriously descended the heights and marched out to the place appointed for the laying down of arms. General Gates was on this occasion extremely courteous, and the Colonial troops were soon fraternising with the English soldiers and striving in every way to supply their many needs and wants.

And so the failure of the New York plans culminating in Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, proved to be one of the mighty little things potential of results that change the destinies of nations.

(adapted from: *Battles of Destiny* by I. Shepperson)

Currier & Ives (printer) and **John Trumbull** (painter), *Surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga N.Y. Oct. 17th. 1777*, c. 1852. Lithograph.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

Siege of Yorktown

(28 September – 19 October, 1781)

If the enemy leaves a door open, you must rush in. Forestall your opponent by seizing what he holds dear, and subtly contrive to time his arrival on the ground. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 65-66)

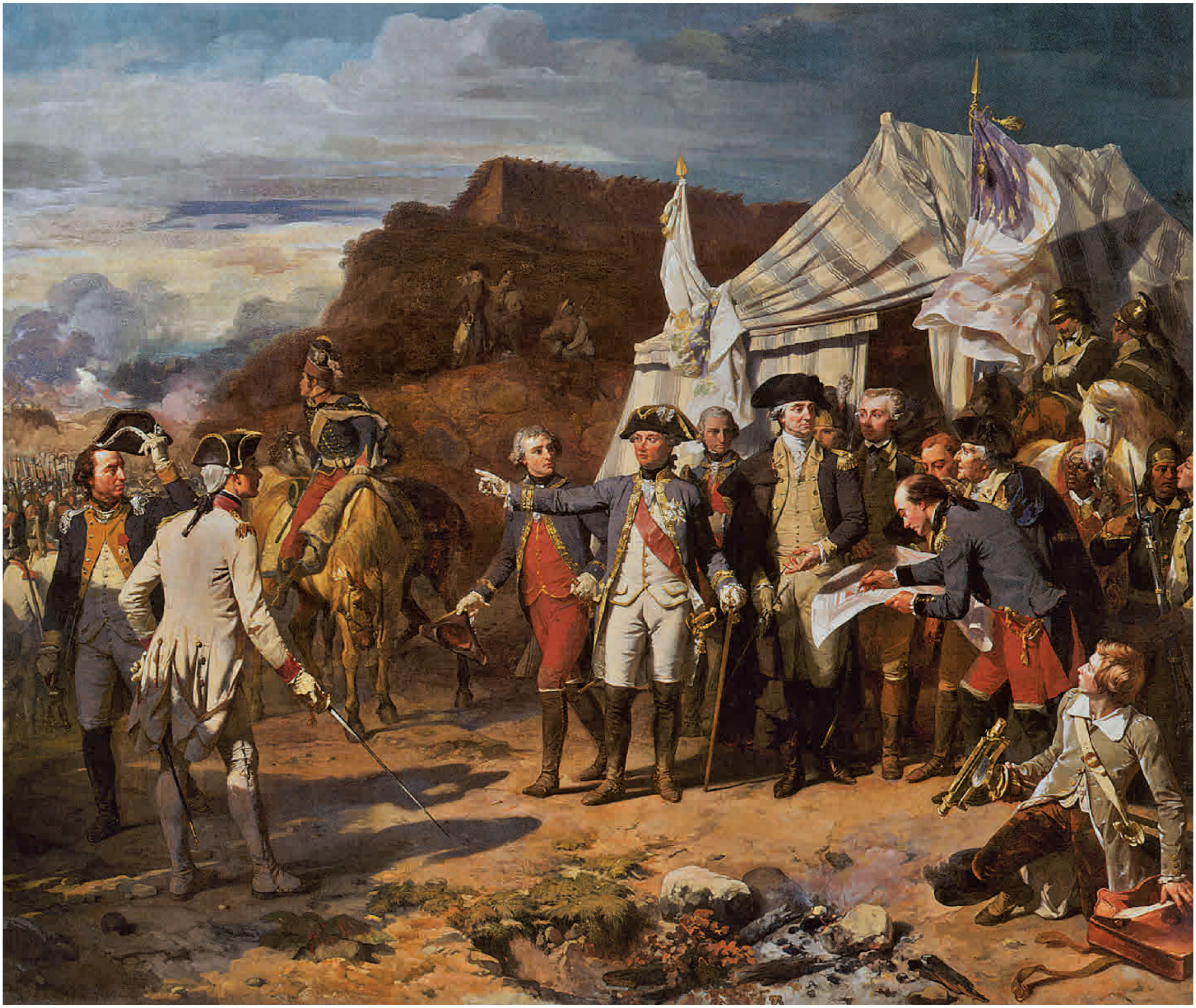
The critical stroke of the war was near. In the South, after General Greene superseded Gates in the command, the tide of war began to turn. Cornwallis now had to fight a better general than Gates. He had some excellent officers, and unlike Gates he did not scorn, with the stiff military traditions of a regular soldier, the aid of guerrilla leaders like Marion and Sumter. The mobility and diversity of the American forces puzzled Cornwallis. When he marched from Camden into North Carolina he hoped to draw Greene into a battle and to crush him as he had crushed Gates. He sent Tarleton with a smaller force to strike a deadly blow at Morgan who was threatening the British garrisons at the points in the interior farther south. The result was a complete disaster. Tarleton himself barely got away with two hundred and seventy men and left behind nearly nine hundred casualties and prisoners. Cornwallis had lost one-third of his effective army.

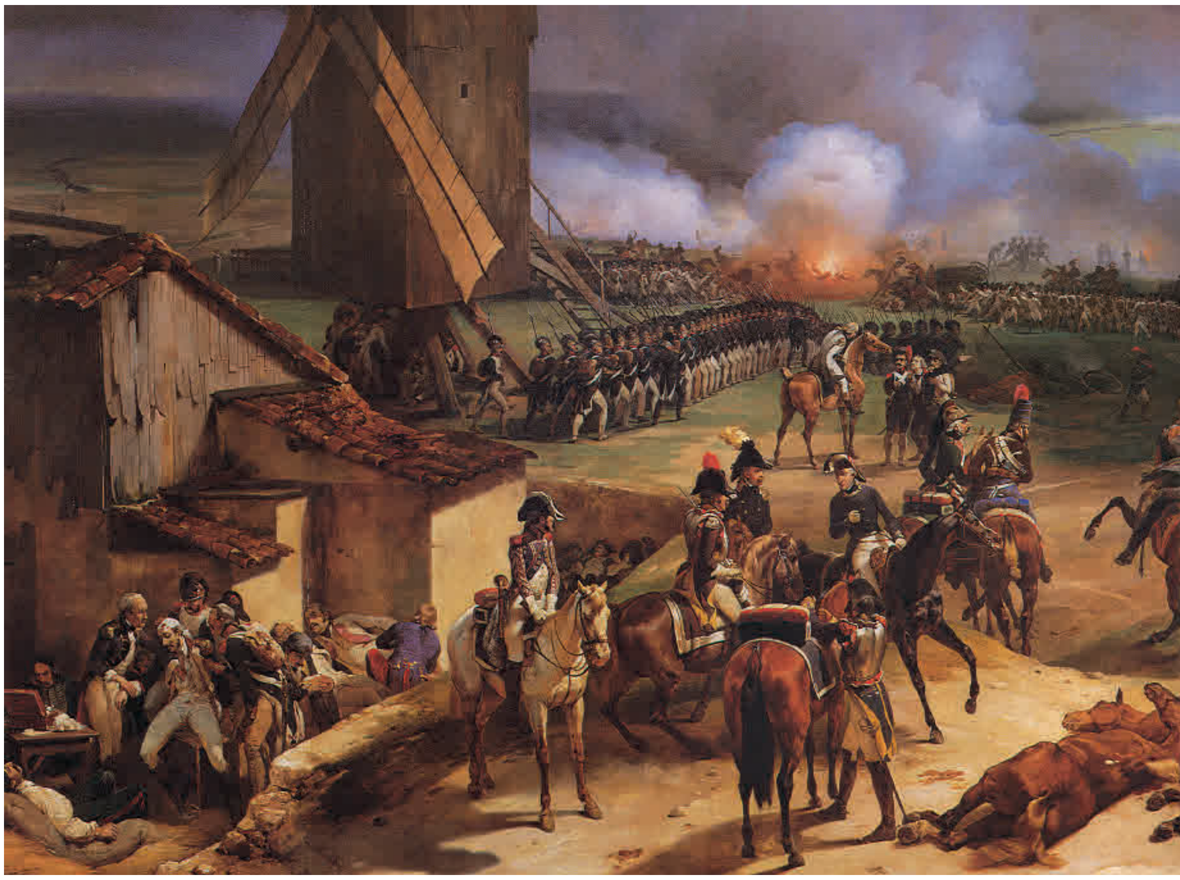
On 2 August Cornwallis established this base at Yorktown, at the mouth of the York River. His cannon could command the whole width of the river and keep in safety ships anchored above the town. Yorktown lay about half way between New York and Charleston and from here a fleet could readily carry a military force to any needed point on the sea. La Fayette, with a growing army, closed in on Yorktown, and Cornwallis, almost before he knew it, was besieged with no hope of rescue except by a fleet. Then it was that from the sea, the restless and mysterious sea, came the final decision.

By 14 August Washington knew two things – that a great French fleet under the Comte de Grasse had sailed for the Chesapeake and that the British army had reached Yorktown. Soon the two allied armies, both lying on the east side of the Hudson, moved southward. A British fleet, numbering nineteen ships of the line, commanded by Admiral Graves, left New York on 31 August and five days later stood off the entrance to Chesapeake Bay. When Graves arrived he had an unpleasant surprise. The strength of the French had been well concealed. There to confront him lay twenty-four enemy ships. The situation was even worse, for the French fleet from Newport was on its way to join Grasse. Against such odds Graves could do nothing. He sailed away to New York to refit. The action of Graves spelled the doom of Cornwallis. The most potent fleet ever gathered in those waters cut him off from rescue by sea. The defences of Yorktown were weakening and in face of this new discouragement the British leader made up his mind that the end was near. Tarleton and other officers condemned Cornwallis sharply for not persisting in the effort to get away. "I thought it would have been wanton and inhuman," he reported later, "to sacrifice the lives of this small body of gallant soldiers." Cornwallis surrendered with some hundreds of sailors and about seven thousand soldiers, of whom two thousand were in hospital. Yorktown settled the issue of the war but did not end it. For more than a year still hostilities continued and, in parts of the South, embittered factions led to more bloodshed.

(adapted from: *Washington and his Comrades in Arms: A Chronicle of the War of Independence* by G. Wrong)

Auguste Couder, *The Capture of Yorktown*, 1836.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 543 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.



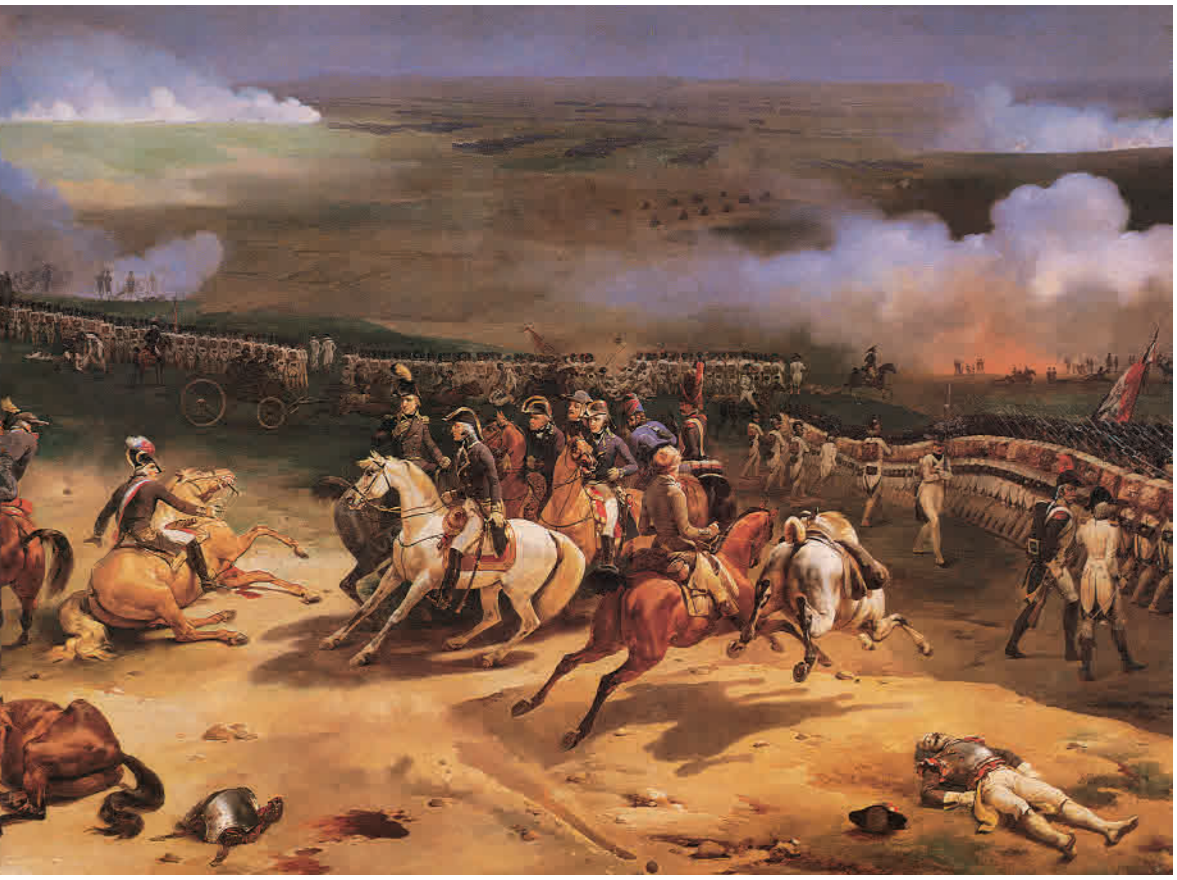


Battle of Valmy
(20 September, 1792)

On the day they are ordered out to battle, your soldiers may weep, those sitting up bedewing their garments, and those lying down letting the tears run down their cheeks. But let them once be brought to bay, and they will display the courage of a Chu *or a* Kuei. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 28)

The last wish of the veteran François Christophe Kellermann on his death-bed was that his heart should be deposited in the battlefield of Valmy, there to repose among the remains of his old companions in arms who had fallen at his side on that spot twenty-eight years before, on the memorable day when they won the primal victory of Revolutionary France, and prevented the armies of Brunswick and the emigrant bands of Condé from marching on defenceless Paris and destroying the immature democracy in its cradle. The successful resistance which the raw Carmagnole levies (revolutionary volunteers) and the disorganised relics of the old monarchy's army then opposed to the combined hosts and chosen leaders of Prussia, Austria, and the French refugee noblesse, determined at once and forever the belligerent character of the Revolution. The raw artisans and tradesmen, the clumsy burghers, the base mechanics, and low peasant-churls, found that they could face cannonballs, pull triggers, and cross bayonets without having been drilled into military machines, and without being officered by scions of noble houses. They awoke to the consciousness of their own instinctive soldiership.

About ten o'clock the fog began to clear off, and then the French from their promontory saw emerging from the white wreaths of mist, and glittering in the sunshine, the countless Prussian cavalry, and the glancing clouds of the Austrian light troops, fresh from their contests with the Spanish of the east. The best and bravest of the French must have beheld



this spectacle with secret apprehension and awe. On that very morning, and at the self-same hour in which the allied forces and the emigrants began to descend from La Lune at the attack of Valmy, and while the cannonade was opening between the Prussian and Revolutionary batteries, the debate in the National Convention at Paris commenced on the proposal to proclaim France a republic.

Contrary to the expectations of both friends and foes, the French infantry held their ground steadily under the fire of the Prussian guns, which thundered on them from La Lune, and their own artillery replied with equal spirit and greater effect on the denser masses of the allied army. Thinking that the Prussians were slackening in their fire, Kellermann formed a column in charging order, and dashed down into the valley in the hopes of capturing some of the nearest guns of the enemy. The troops caught the enthusiasm of their general, and a cheerful shout of "Vive la nation", taken up by one battalion from another, pealed across the valley to the assailants. The Prussians hesitated from a charge up hill against a force that seemed so resolute and formidable; they halted for a while in the hollow, and then slowly retreated up their own side of the valley.

All hopes of crushing the Revolutionary armies, and of the promenade to Paris, had now vanished. France, meanwhile, felt that she possessed a giant's strength, and like a giant did she use it. Before the close of that year all Belgium obeyed the National Convention at Paris, and the kings of Europe, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, trembled once more before a conquering military republic.

(adapted from: The *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World: from Marathon to Waterloo* by E.S. Creasy)

Jean Baptiste Mauzaisse (after **Horace Vernet**), *Battle of Valmy, 20th September 1792,* 1834.
Oil on canvas, 296 x 678 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.

Battle of Fleurus

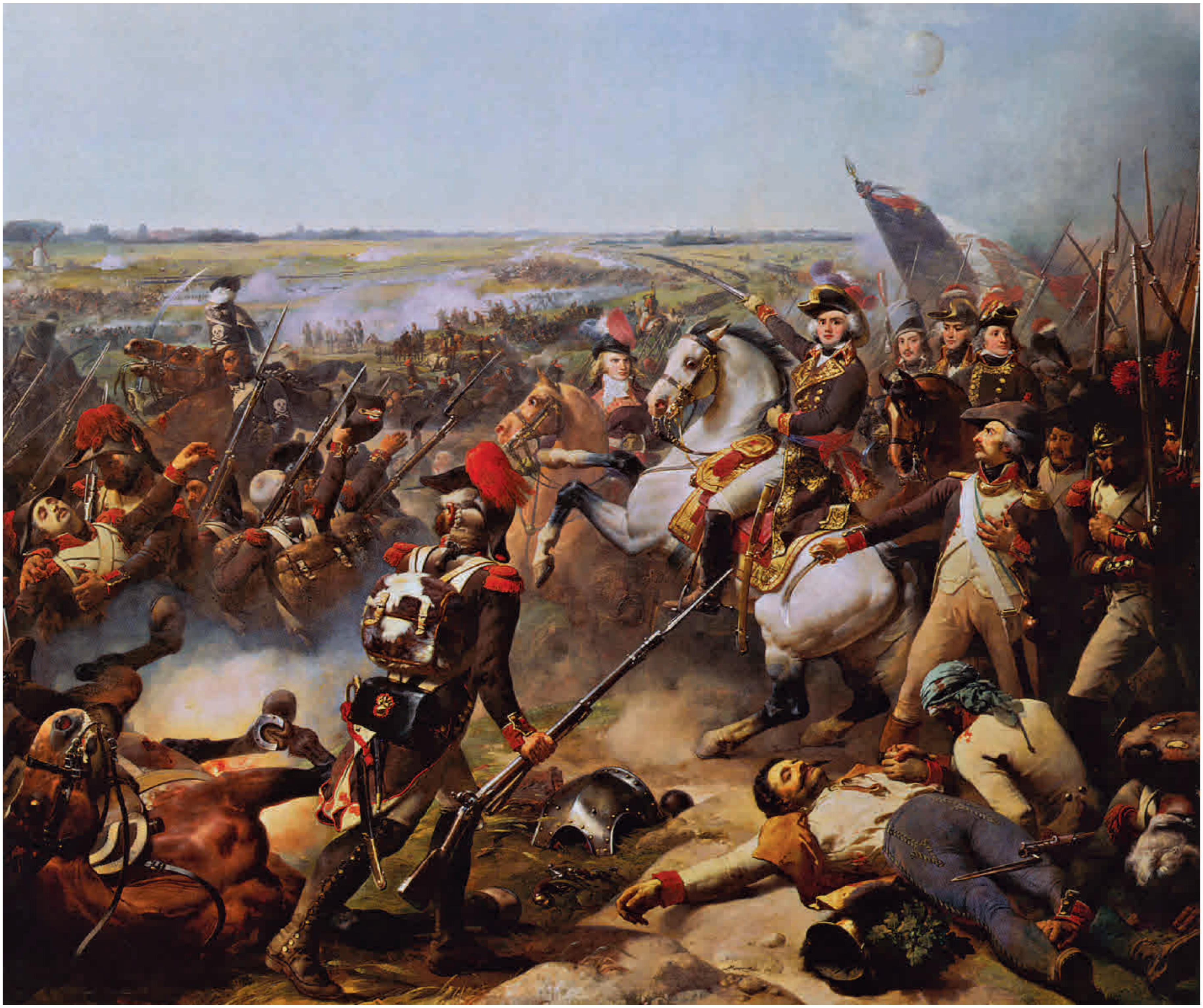
(26 June, 1794)

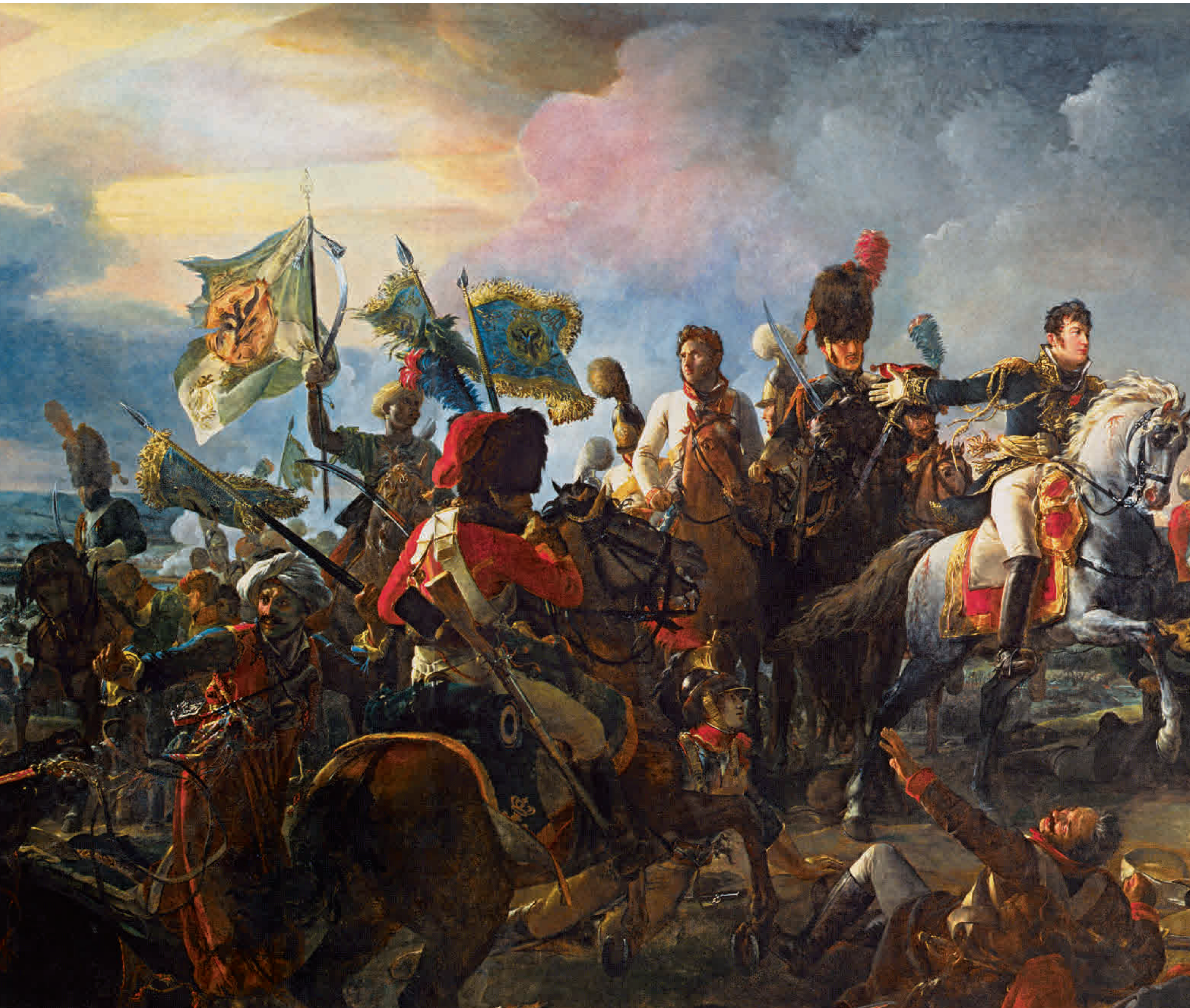
If our troops are no more in number than the enemy, that is amply sufficient; it only means that no direct attack can be made. What we can do is simply to concentrate all our available strength, keep a close watch on the enemy, and obtain reinforcements. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 9, 40)

The attack commenced on the morning of the 8th of Messidor (the tenth month of the French Republican Calendar; June-July), 1794. The Prince of Orange and General Latour, who faced Kléber on the left, beat back the columns, and drove them through the wood of Monceaux to Marchienne-au-Pont, on the bank of the Sambre. Kléber, who was fortunately placed on the left for the purpose of directing all the divisions there, immediately hastened to the threatened point, dispatched batteries to the heights, enveloped the Austrians in the wood of Monceaux and attacked them on all sides. The latter, having perceived that Charleroi was in possession of the French, began to show some hesitation. Kléber, taking advantage of it, caused them to be attacked with vigour, and obliged them to retire from Marchienne-au-Pont. While Kléber was thus saving one of the extremities, Jourdan was doing no less for the centre and the right. Morlot, who was in advance of Gosselies, had long made head against General Quasdanovich, and attempted several manoeuvres for the purpose of turning him; but had at length been turned himself, and fallen back upon Gosselies, after the most honourable efforts. Championnet, supported upon the redoubt of Hepignies, resisted with the same vigour; but the corps of Kaunitz had advanced to turn the redoubt at the very moment of the arrival of false intelligence stating the retreat of Lefebvre on the right. While both sides were charging with great fury, the battle was raging still more violently nearer to the Sambre, at Wagnelée and Lambusart. Beaulieu, ascending along both banks of the Sambre at once for the purpose of attacking our extreme right, drove back Marceau's division. That division fled in all haste through the woods bordering the Sambre, and even crossed the river in disorder. Marceau then collected some battalions, and, regardless of the rest of the fugitive division, threw himself into Lambusart, to perish there rather than abandon that post contiguous to the Sambre, which was an indispensable support of our extreme right. This spot became the decisive point of the battle. Beaulieu, perceiving this, directed thither a third column while Jourdan despatched the rest of his reserve to the spot. The combat was kept up around the village of Lambusart with extraordinary obstinacy. The corn and the huts of the camp caught fire, and the combatants were soon fighting amidst a conflagration. The republicans at last remained masters of Lambusart. At this moment, the French, at first pushed back, had succeeded in restoring the battle at all points. Kléber had covered the Sambre on the left; Morlot, having fallen back to Gosselies, maintained himself there; Championnet had retaken Hepignies and a furious combat at Lambusart had ensured us that position. Night was now approaching. Beaulieu had just learned, upon the Sambre, what the Prince of Orange already knew, that Charleroi was in the possession of the French. Daring no longer to persist, Coburg then ordered a general retreat. Such was this decisive engagement, one of the most sanguinary in the whole campaign, fought along a semicircle of ten leagues between two armies of nearly eighty thousand men each. It was called the Battle of Fleurus, though that village acted but a secondary part.

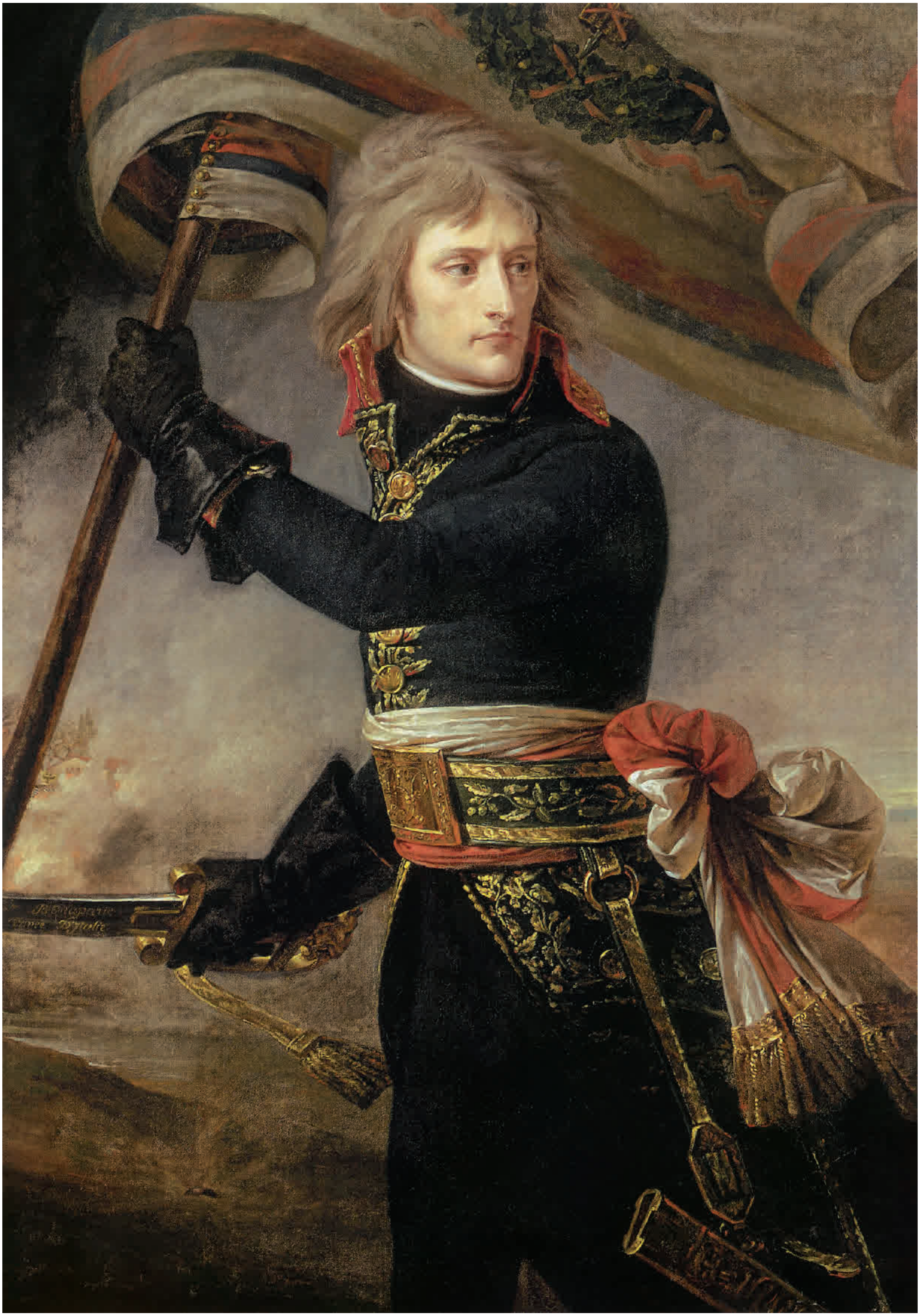
(adapted from: *History of the French Revolution* by M.J.L.A. Thiers)

Jean Baptiste Mauzaisse, *Battle of Fleurus, 26th June 1794*, 1837.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 543 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.





The Napoleonic Wars



Battle of Arcole

(15-17 November, 1796)

Place your army in deadly peril, and it will survive; plunge it into desperate straits, and it will come off in safety. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 58)

On 15, 16, and 17 November, 1796, during Napoleon's campaign in Italy, sanguinary engagements took place near the small town of Arcola, on the river Alpora, fifteen miles east of Verona, in Austrian Italy. Napoleon, with an army of 20,000 men, fatigued by fighting, was in Verona. Suddenly there appeared before the city a fresh Austrian army of 30,000 men. Napoleon determined upon a movement, the danger of which was only eclipsed by its brilliancy. On the night of 14 November, without communicating to anyone his design, he conducted his army in the most profound silence out of the city. Crossing the Adige, the French army marched toward Milan, when suddenly an order was given to turn to the left, and descending the course of the river, the army arrived before day-break at Ronco. On the opposite shore of the river was an immense morass, and beyond it was the Austrian army. Now passing quickly from one extreme to another, the soldiers were ready to follow Napoleon into the very jaws of death.

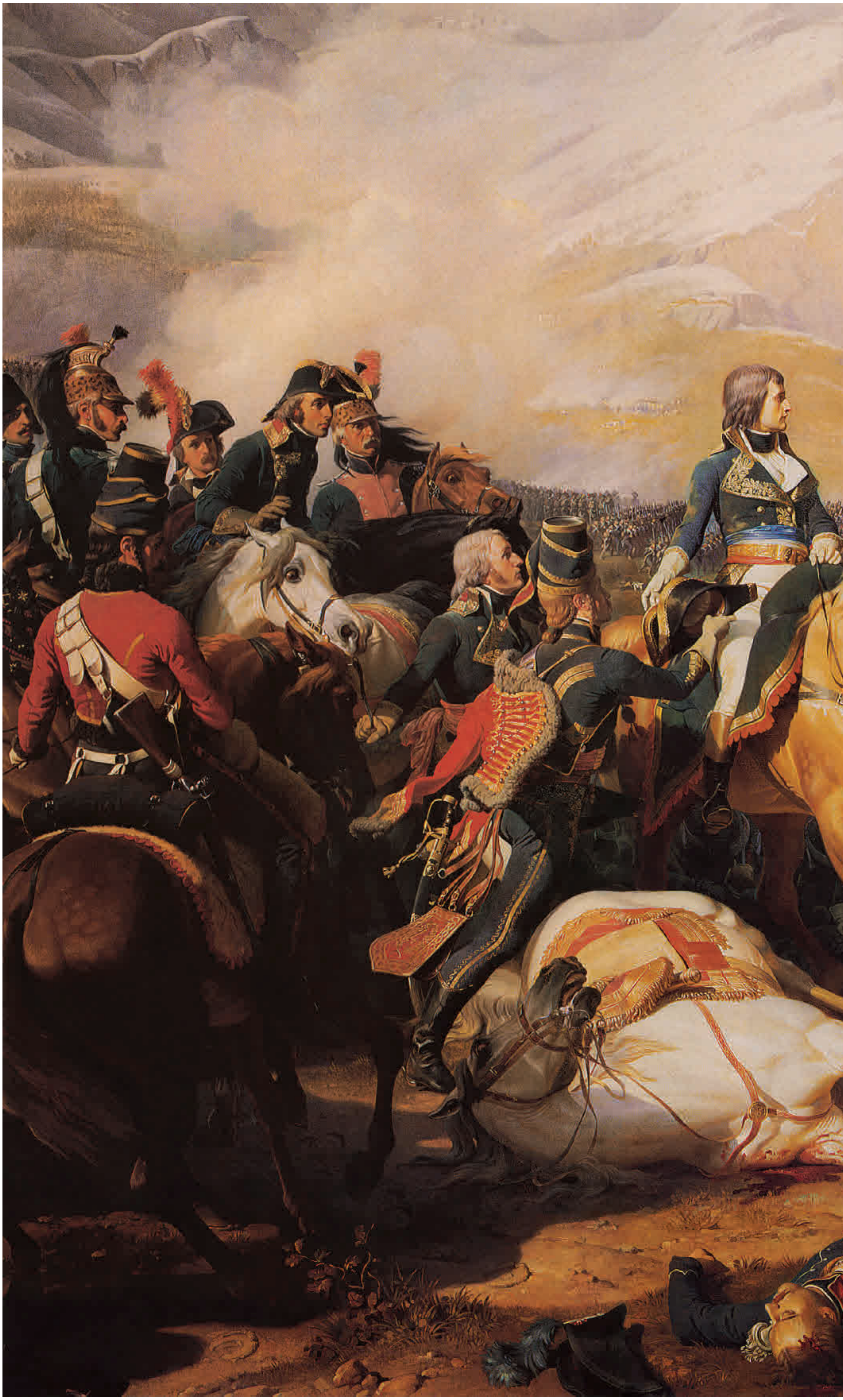
A bridge of boats being already prepared, the army immediately crossed the river. Unable to withstand the fire of the enemy, the French troops were driven back. Now, a desperate struggle commenced; the French column advanced with the utmost intrepidity; but the Austrians received them with a tremendous fire from the artillery in front, sweeping the bridge, and committing frightful havoc upon the head of the column, which faltered and fell back. The possession of Arcola was indispensable to Napoleon. The safety of his army, the success of his future operations, all depended upon it. In the morning the strife was renewed. The Austrians, in two columns advanced along the dykes; the French met them with such a furious charge with the bayonet, that the Austrians were routed with great bloodshed. The battle continued through the day and at nightfall, both parties retired, the Austrians over the Alpora, the French across the Adige. Again the morning dawned on the bloody field, and both parties with diminished numbers, but with undiminished fury, advanced to the struggle. The Austrian column in the centre, committed terrific slaughter on the French grenadiers, who finally fell back before the irresistible fire of the enemy, so far that the Austrian balls fell upon the bridge of Ronco.

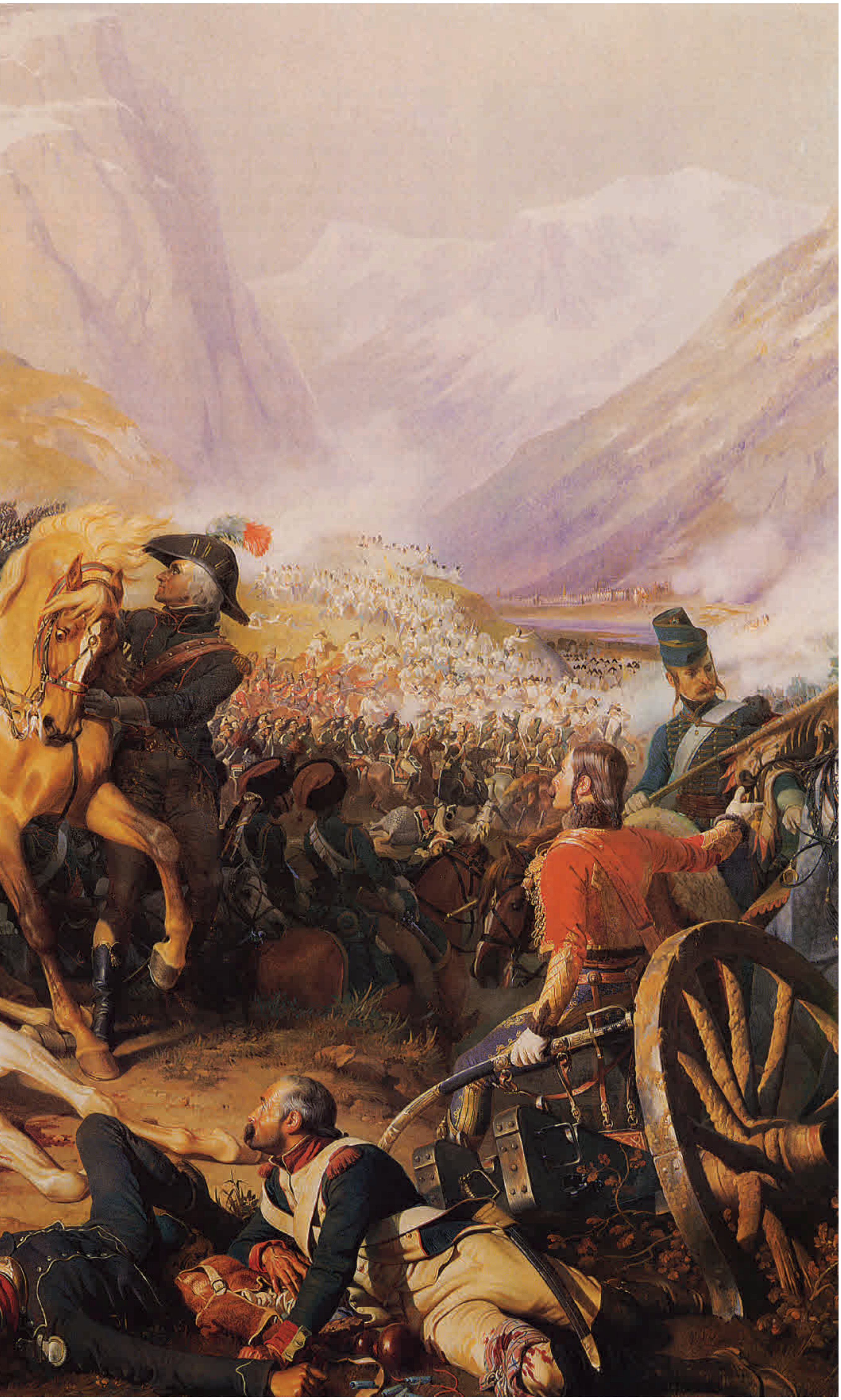
Towards noon, Napoleon, perceiving that the enemy was exhausted with fatigue, ordered a general charge of all his forces along both causeways. The Austrians, unable to withstand the terrible shock of the French charge, was soon swept off both dykes, and shortly afterward evacuated Arcola. The French general also sent a body of trumpeters into a marsh of reeds by the extreme left flank of the Austrians, with directions to sound a charge the moment the action became general. The Austrians bravely resisted in front, but suddenly, hearing the sound of trumpets and cannon on their flank and rear, thought that they were assaulted by a whole division of cavalry on their flank, and threatened with a cannonade in their rear, the Austrian commanders ordered a retreat, and yielded a victory which they had so long and so bravely contested. Without losing time, Napoleon, after his victory at Arcola, immediately marched toward Verona, and fell upon the Austrian forces under Davidowich. The Austrians, after an obstinate resistance, were at length compelled to retire into Tyrol.

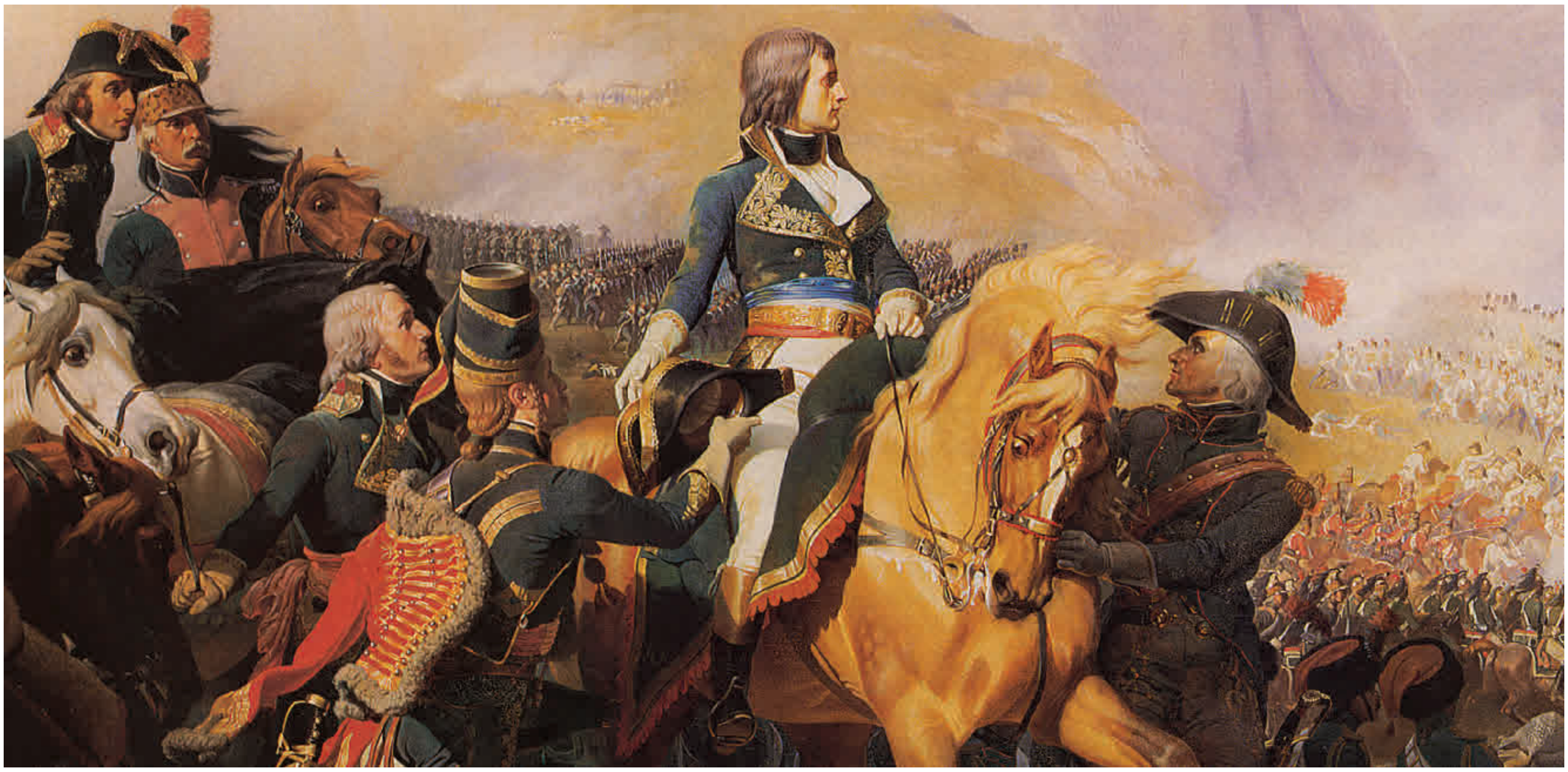
(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

François Gérard, *Battle of Austerlitz*, 1808.
Oil on canvas, 510 x 958 cm. Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. (pp. 166-167)

Antoine Jean Gros, *Napoleon I on the Bridge of Arcole*, 1796.
Oil on canvas, 130 x 94 cm. Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.







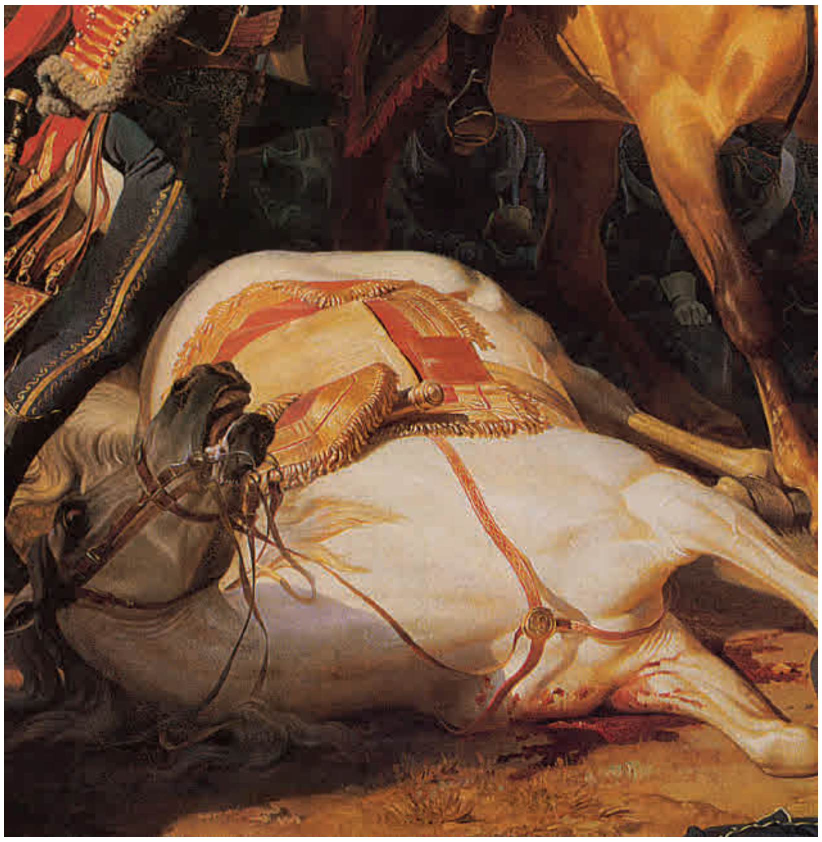
Battle of Rivoli

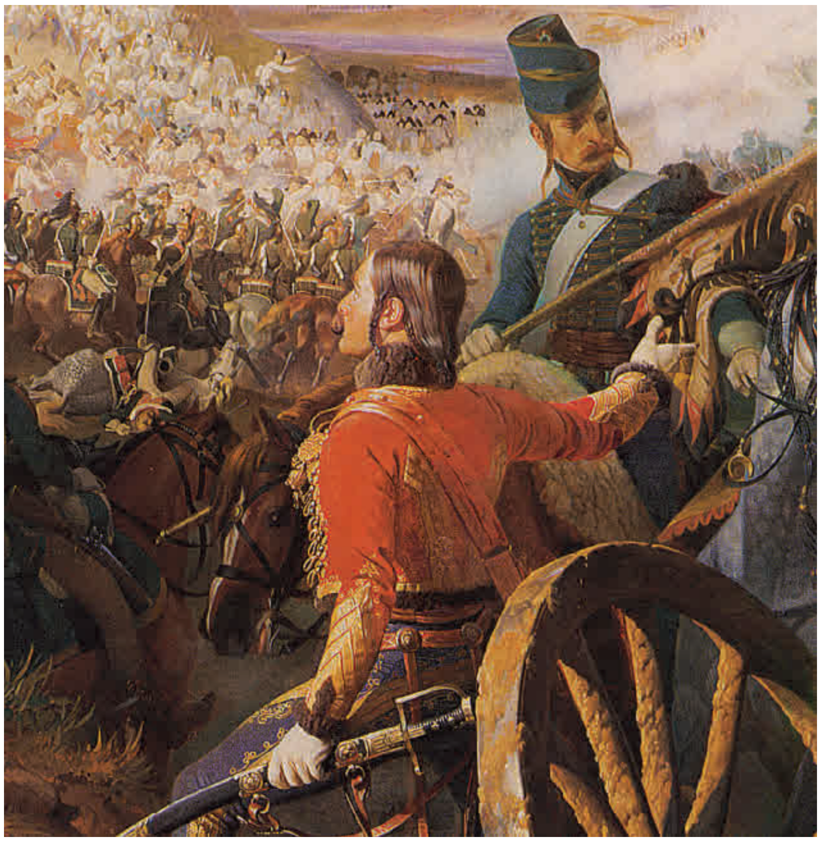
(14-15 January, 1797)

The general who is skilled in defence hides in the most secret recesses of the earth; he who is skilled in attack flashes forth from the topmost heights of heaven. Thus on the one hand we have ability to protect ourselves; on the other, a victory that is complete. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 4, 7)

On 14 January, 1797, the Battle of Rivoli was fought between the French and Austrians in Italy. In opposition to Austria's 28,000-strong force, Napoleon had only 23,000 men; but his position was more favourable, being an upland, elevated among the mountains, which would occasion much fatigue to his enemies to reach it. On 14 January, at nine o'clock, the action commenced by the Austrians attacking the French left. After resisting manfully, the regiments were broken and fled in confusion, upon which Napoleon rode in haste to the village of Rivoli, where Massena, who had marched all night, was resting from his fatigue, led his division to the front, and by a bold charge restored the combat in that quarter. This check had compelled Joubert, who was on the right, to give way.

The French army, attacked in front, flank, and rear at the same time, the retreat being also cut off, saw no way of escape from the bayonets of their enemies but in the precipices of the Alps. The presence of mind of Napoleon did not forsake him at this perilous moment. In order to gain time he sent a flag of truce to Alvinzi, proposing a suspension of arms for half an hour, as he had some propositions to make in consequence of dispatches from Paris. Napoleon had gained time to face the danger, all he wished at this critical period, and was now on the defensive. Napoleon, far from being disconcerted,



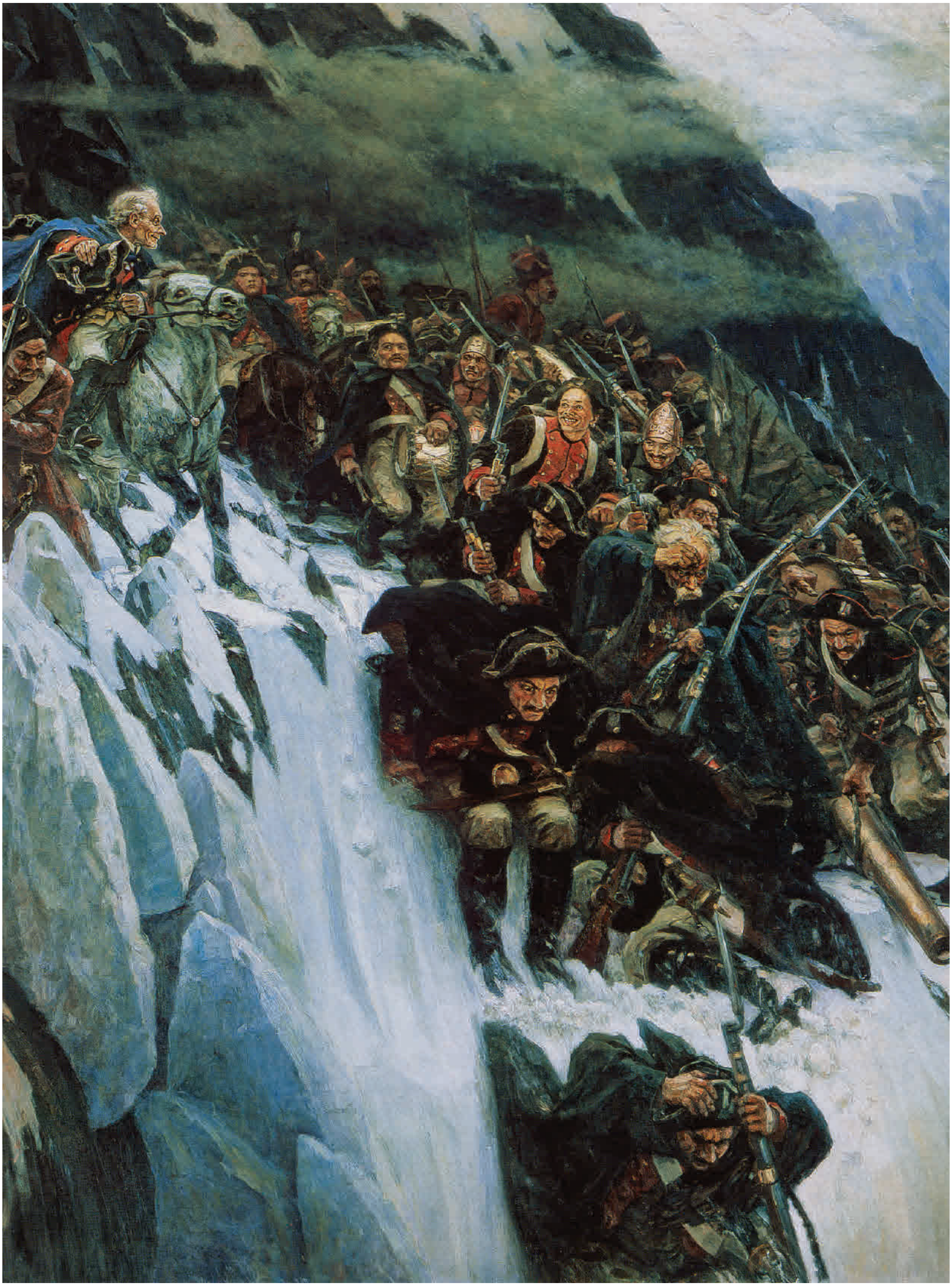


spoke to the soldiers in a confident tone, and assured them of success.

The head of Quasdanovich's division, which had so bravely accomplished the ascent, received in front a terrible fire of grapeshot, charged on one flank by Lasalle's horse, and exposed on the other to the musketry of Joubert, broke, and hurried backward down the steep. The fugitives, rushing headlong into the column that was ascending, threw it into the most dire confusion, cavalry, infantry, and cannon struggled together under a terrible fire from the batteries of the French, while at the same time some ammunition-wagons blew up, and all was a scene of frightful disorder. As soon as the plateau was safe from this flank attack Napoleon fell upon the troops which had descended from the heights, and that heroic band, being destitute of artillery, and also deprived of the aid which they expected from the troops in flank, soon gave way and fled to the mountains where most of them were made prisoners. Then they gave up all hope. The French troops were speedily directed against this column, now separated from all support, and depressed by the ruin which it beheld in other parts of the army. For some time they maintained their position, but the fire of fifteen pieces of heavy artillery, to which they had nothing to oppose, at length compelled them to retreat, and they had not proceeded far when they encountered the division under Massena. The consternation produced was so great that the whole column laid down their arms, while Quasdanovich, left entirely to his own resources, retired up the valley of the Adige.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Félix Philippoteaux, *Battle of Rivoli*, 1844.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 543 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. (pp. 170-171, 172, 173)



Alexander Suvorov's Italian and Swiss Campaign
(1799-1800)

Therefore the clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him. By holding out advantages to him, he can cause the enemy to approach of his own accord; or, by inflicting damage, he can make it impossible for the enemy to draw near. […] *Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend; march swiftly to places where you are not expected.* (Sun Tzu, Ch. 6, 2/3/5)

At the end of the 18th century, even Russia, beside England and Austria, was drawn into the war between France and the allied European noble house. After the French army had routed the allied forces several times, the English and Austrian military leaders wanted to employ the genius of Russian general Alexander Suvorov and the Imperial Russian army against them.

In April 1799 Suvorov arrived in Italy and immediately started hostilities against the French army. Despite the obstacles that the Austrian military command put in his way, he scored one victory after another, ignoring the policies of the allied cabal, purely with the strength of his will and the courage of his Russian soldiers. Within five months he captured 25 fortresses, 3,000 pieces of artillery and made 80,000 prisoners. An invasion into French territory was expected to occur soon. However, this did not fit into the plans of Vienna's and London's cabinets. They had no difficulties to convince the Russian emperor to order a withdrawal of his troops from Italy and sent them to Swiss territory where they would have to replace the Archduke's Austrian troops who were facing the French together with another Russian corps, Rimski-Korsakow's soldiers. Austrian troops slowly started being withdrawn from Switzerland, leaving the Russians behind. In order to come to the relief of the stranded Russian corps, Suvorov had to make his way over the Alps; without adequate equipment. He came up with an extensive plan for the coalition and marched to Taberno, a township at the foot of the Alps, where he again had to endure bad treatment, this time by the Austrian general Melas, who did not provide him with the promised beasts of burden necessary for a mountain crossing. The departure was delayed for another possibly fateful six days.

Since time was running out, Suvorov decided to storm the pass of St Gotthard. Skirmishing his way up to the mountain pass, he overcame the worst conditions, crossed the *Teufelsbrücke* (devil's bridge) and descended down the slopes into the Muotatal. Meanwhile, Massena had shattered the allied troop cohesion by engaging them individually, after having received news of the Russian army's delay. Gotze's corps had been defeated near Zurich while Rimski-Korsakow had been chased far north. This development led to Suvorov's army of 23,000 men being surrounded by a French army 80,000 soldiers strong. While holding a war council, Suvorov said: "No one can relieve us and we are at the very edge of defeat. What is left to us, is the courage and the spirit of self-sacrifice of our troops. We are Russians!" He found a solution in a strategy that paired short, daring skirmishes with a constant change in marching direction. The situation was made worse, however, by the cowardly retreat of the Austrian troops. Suvorov escaped Massena's troops by crossing the snow-covered Panixer Pass and leading his army (largely intact) into the Rhinetal. Suvorov's courage and tactical genius had saved the Russian army from certain annihilation. Massena reportedly to said afterwards: "I would exchange all my campaigns for Suvorov's one Swiss campaign."

(adapted from: *Vasily Surikov* by V. Kemenov)

Vasilij Surikov, *Suvorov's Army Crossing the Alps in 1799*, 1899.
Oil on canvas, 495 x 373 cm.
State Russian Museum, St Petersburg.

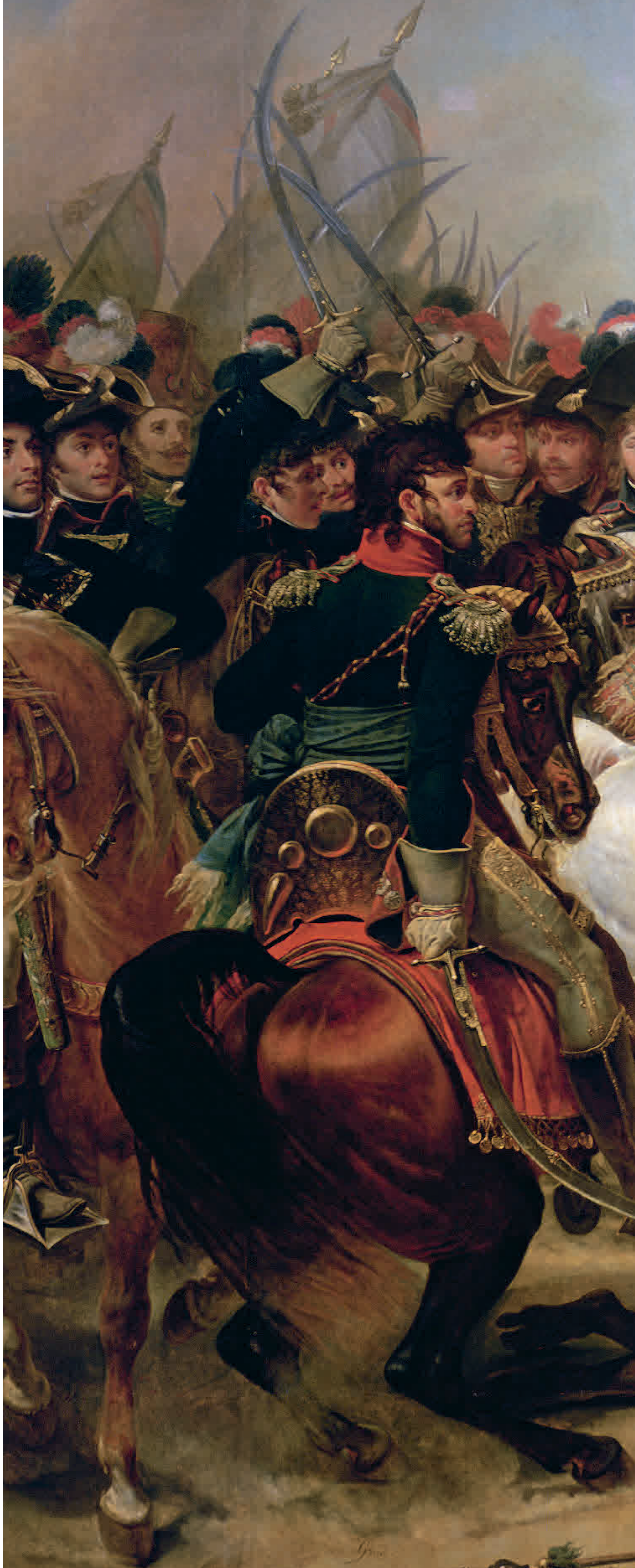
Battle of the Pyramids
(21 July, 1798)

Those who were called skillful leaders of old knew how to drive a wedge between the enemy's front and rear; to prevent co-operation between his large and small divisions; to hinder the good troops from rescuing the bad, the officers from rallying their men. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 9, 15)

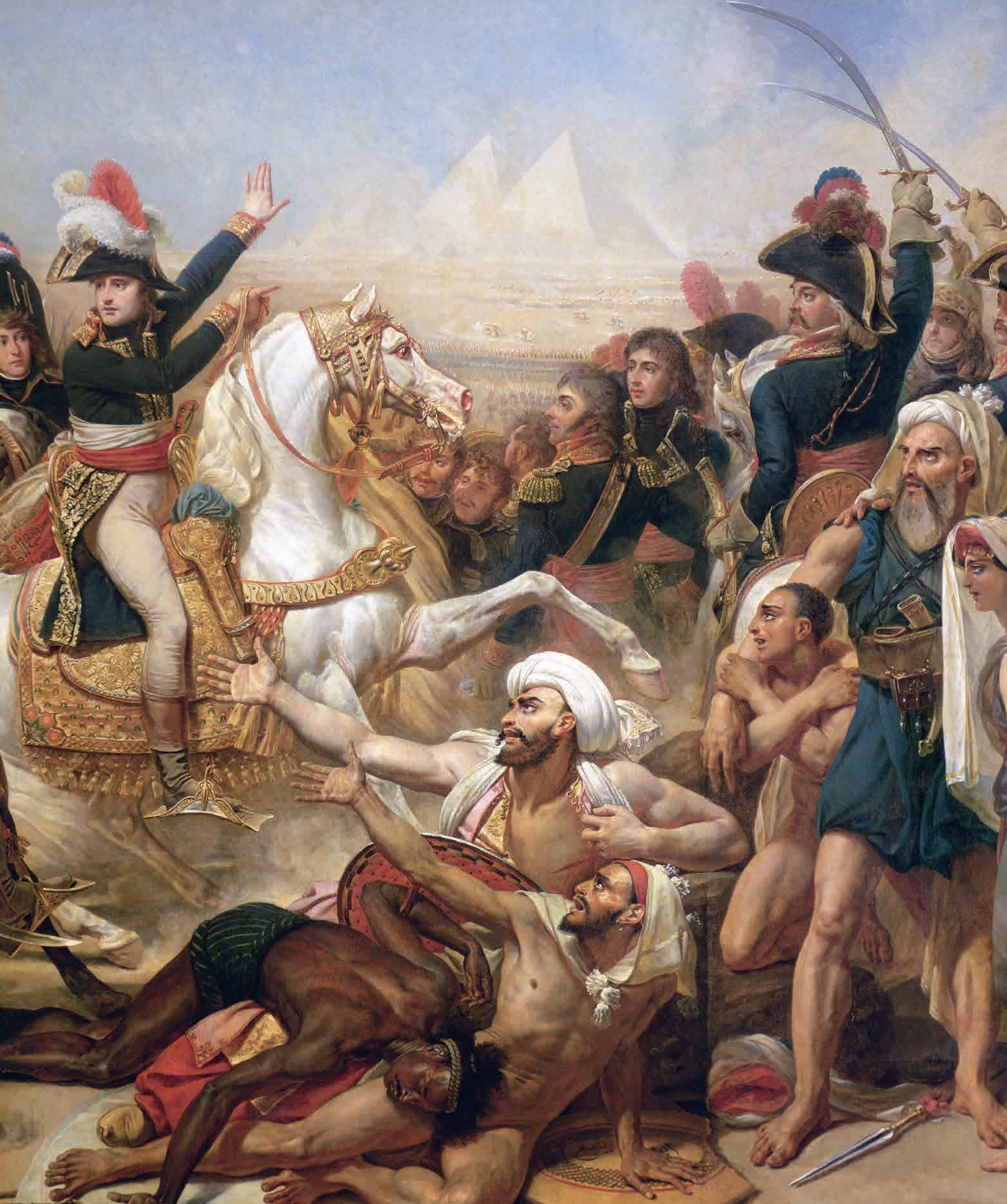
The Battle of the Pyramids occurred on 21 July, 1798. The French army was commanded by Napoleon, and that of the Mamelukes by Mourad Bey. The Mamelukes were furious; they dashed their horses against the ramparts of bayonets, and threw their pistols at the heads of the grenadiers, while many whose horses had been killed crept along on the ground, and with their cimeters, cut off the legs of those occupying the front ranks. In vain thousands followed, and rode round the flaming walls of steel; the fire was incessant, and multitudes perished. At last, the survivors, in despair, fled toward the camp which they had lately left. Here they were charged in flank by Napoleon, at the head of Dagua's division, while Vial and Bon, on the extreme left, stormed the entrenchment. The utmost confusion now prevailed in the camp, the horsemen, driven back in disorder, trampled under foot the infantry, who, panic-struck at the rout of the Mamelukes, on whom their hopes depended, abandoned their ranks, and fled to their boats to escape to the other side of the Nile.

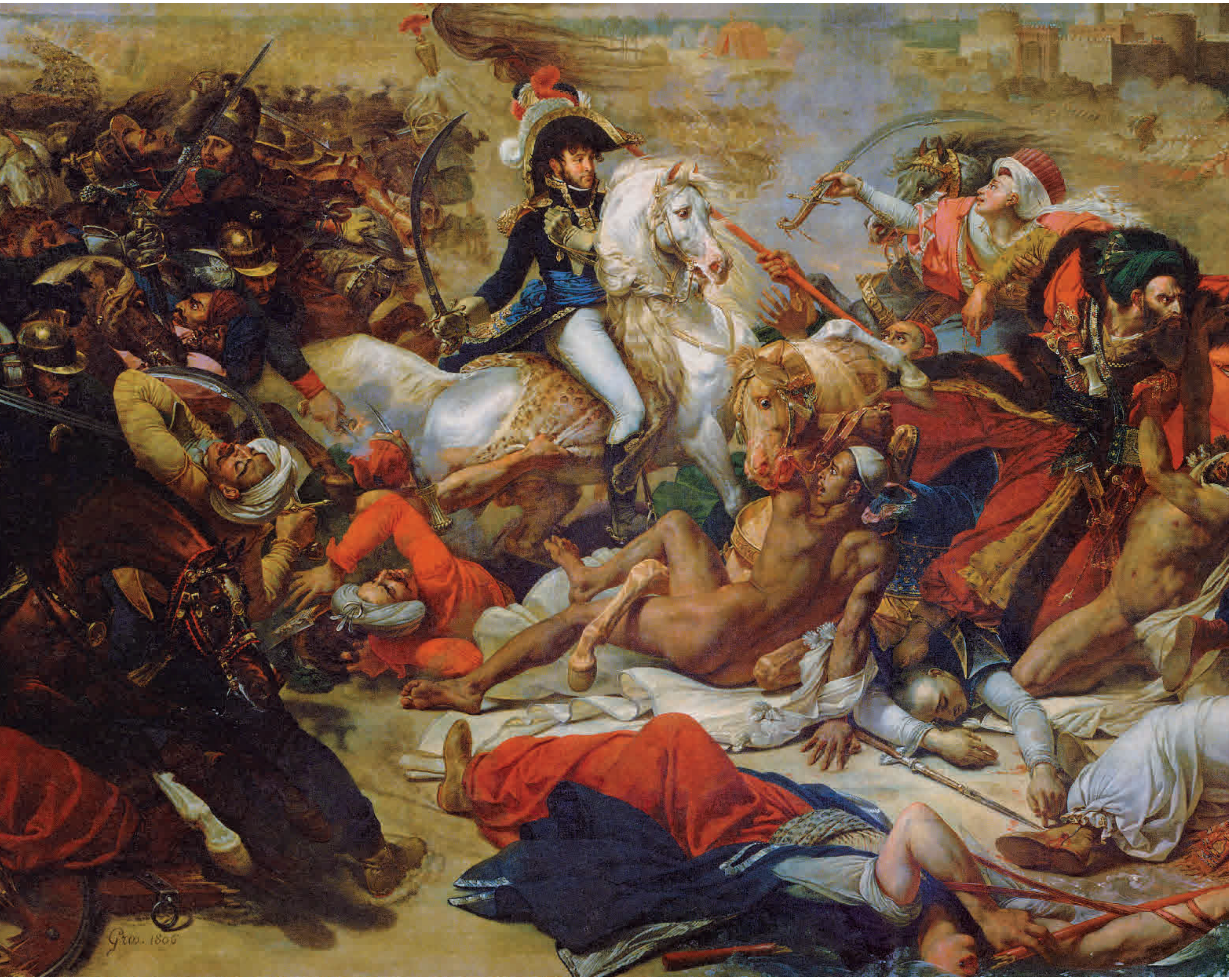
The desperation of the Mamelukes was such, that seeing no means of escape, they fell upon the approaching columns, at the right, with their wings extended in order of attack, but with inconceivable rapidity they formed in a square, drove them back with great slaughter, and drove them back in the direction of the Pyramids. The French hardly lost 200 men in the action, and several days were employed after the battle in stripping the dead of their magnificent apparel, or fishing up the rich spoils from the banks of the Nile.

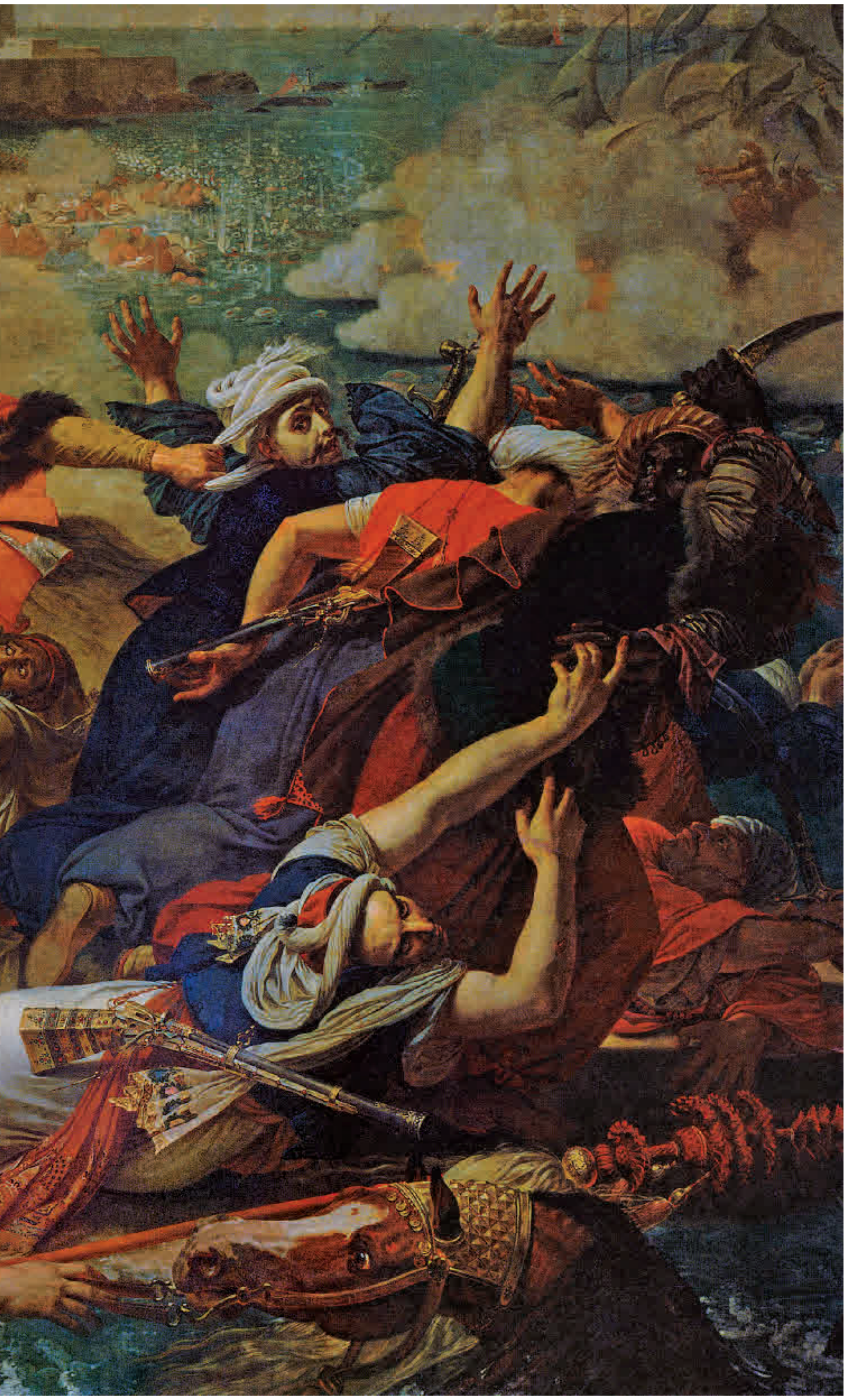
(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)



Antoine Jean Gros, *The Battle of the Pyramids, 21st July 1798*, 1st quarter of the 19th century.
Oil on canvas, 389 x 311 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.




Gros. 1806



Battle of Aboukir

(25 July, 1799)

The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike and destroy its victim. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 5, 13)

On 25 July, 1799, Napoleon arrived within sight of the peninsula of Aboukir, to the north-east of Alexandria. Before him lay the entrenched camp of the Turks, and although the force of the enemy exceeded Napoleon's, he determined to make an immediate attack. Napoleon established a battery to protect the operations of his troops, and he commenced an attack upon the interior and more formidable line of defence of the Turks. General D'Estaing's division should attack the entrenchment on the right, while the principal effort was to be directed to the left, and take the Turkish line in the rear.

The attack had failed at both extremities, and Napoleon was doubtful whether he should continue the combat or rest contented with the advantage already gained. But the Turks relieved Napoleon from this perplexity. No sooner did they see the column which had assailed their right retire, than they rushed out of the fort of Aboukir, and began to cut off the heads of the dead bodies which lay scattered over the plain. Napoleon instantly saw his advantage, and advancing rapidly with his reserves in admirable order, he arrested the sortie in the centre, while Lannes returned to the attack of the entrenchments, now, denuded of their defenders, and D'Estaing re-formed his troops for another effort on the lines to the right. And these attacks proved successful; Murat penetrated into the camp of Mustapha Pacha, where he made that commander prisoner with his own hands. The remnant of the Turkish army, fled to the fort of Aboukir. A heavy cannonade was immediately opened on the fort, which surrendered on 30 July.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Antoine Jean Gros, *The Battle of Aboukir, 25th July 1799*, 1807. Oil on canvas, 578 x 968 cm. Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.

Battle of Hohenlinden

(3 December, 1800)

If, on the other hand, in the midst of difficulties we are always ready to seize an advantage, we may extricate ourselves from misfortune. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 8, 9)

Hohenlinden is a village situated 20 miles east of the city of Munich, in Upper Bavaria. The battle was fought by the Austrians under the Archduke John, and the French under General Moreau on 3 December 1800.

Early in the morning the Austrian army, on the opposite side of the woods, plunged in three columns into the forest to approach the enemy. The infantry marched first; then came the long train of artillery and baggage-wagons, and the cavalry closed the procession. The ground was covered with snow. The central column, which advanced along the only good road, outstripped the other, and its head had traversed the forest, and approached Hohenlinden. Here it was met by the division of Grouchy, and a furious conflict immediately commenced. The Austrians, after an obstinate struggle, were gradually driven back into the forest; their ranks were broken by the trees, but posting themselves behind the trunks, they kept up a murderous fire on the enemy. The French eagerly charging upon the retiring enemy, were also broken by the trees, and the contending armies fought man to man, with obstinate fury. In the meantime the head of the Austrian column on the right appeared at the entrance of the forest on the other road. General Ney's division instantly advanced to this point, and by a vigorous charge on the flank of the enemy's column, drove it back into the forest.

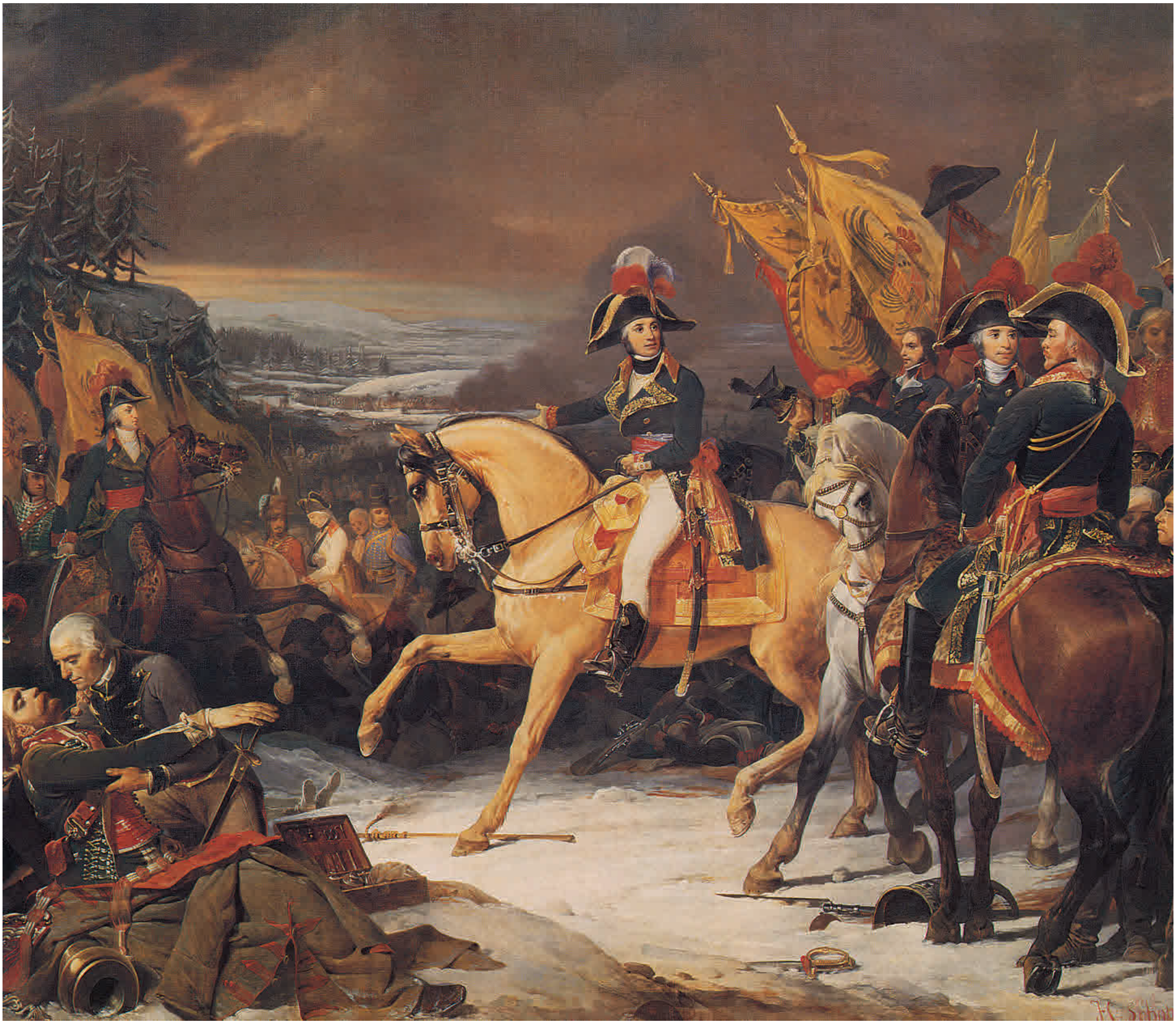
As Richepanse approached the decisive point, and was slowly advancing in open column through the forest, his division was pierced through the centre by the Austrian left wing, under Riesch. The manoeuvre which he was destined to have performed on the centre of the Austrians, was turned against himself, and with a single brigade he was placed between that immense body and their left wing. But undaunted by the alarming circumstance, Richepanse, pushed bravely on with his troops, to fall on the rear of the grand column of the enemy and advanced toward Maitenbeth.

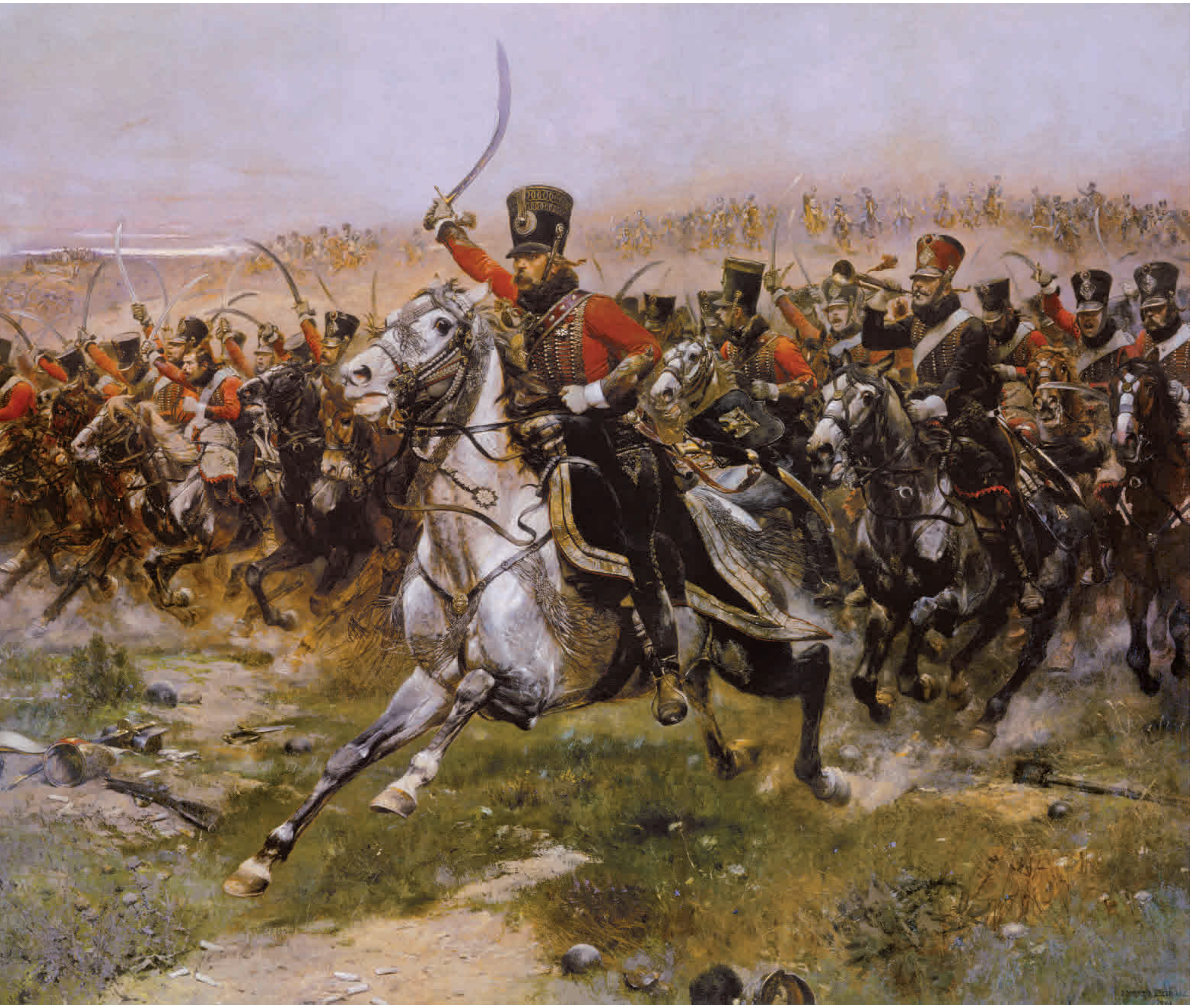
The sound of cannon in the direction of Maitenbeth, and the appearance of hesitation and confusion in the enemy's column, announced to Moreau that Richepanse had made a decisive attack on the rear of the Austrian centre. He instantly ordered Grouchy and Ney to make a combined charge in front on the enemy. The French battalions now commenced a furious onset; and the Austrian centre, shaken by the alarm in its rear, was violently assailed in front.

The Austrian column was thrown into the utmost confusion. The artillery drivers galloped in all directions, the infantry disbanded and fled; the cavalry in tumultuous masses rushed to the rear, trampling under foot whatever opposed their passage; 97 pieces of cannon, 300 caissons, and 7,000 prisoners, fell into the hands of the French. Meanwhile the Austrian right, under Latour, and Keinmayer, who had succeeded in debouching from the forest and uniting in the plain, violently assailed the French left, where Grenier, with inferior forces, defended the other road to Munich. An obstinate conflict ensued, and the French were gradually losing ground, when the intelligence of the defeat of the centre reached the enemy, and compelled them to retire precipitately into the forest. Grenier instantly ordered a general charge of all his forces. Animated by the success of their centre and right, the French troops rushed impetuously to the charge. The Austrians, struggling in the defile, were overwhelmed and put to flight.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Henri-Frédéric Schopin, *The Battle of Hohenlinden, 3rd December 1800*, 1836.
Oil on canvas, 465 x 543 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.





Battle of Friedland

(14 June, 1807)

To muster his host and bring it into danger – this may be termed the business of the general. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 40)

On 13 June, 1807, the Russian army, retreating before the victorious army of the Emperor Napoleon, reached Friedland, where headquarters were established. The French vanguard troops were constantly reinforced in the rear by the arrival of detached portions of the main body, which were steadily advancing toward Friedland. Shortly after, 3,000 men in a column advanced straight toward Friedland. The Russians permitted them to approach close to their batteries unmolested, when suddenly they opened a terrible fire of grape, which, crashing through the assailants, struck down 1,000 men; but shortly afterward the French received fresh reinforcements, and the Russians were in turn cut down with great loss. Napoleon heard the sound of the cannon, and mounting his horse rode rapidly to the front.

On l4 June, by three o'clock in the afternoon, the bulk of the French army had arrived, and Napoleon at once dispatched orders for all the troops to prepare for action in an hour. The whole army was directed to advance in *echelon*, with the right in front, and the left slightly thrown back.

At five o'clock, at a signal given by the discharge of twenty pieces of cannon from the French centre, the whole army stood to arms, and immediately the heads of General Ney's columns were seen emerging from the woods behind Posthenen, and rapidly advancing upon Friedland. Eagerly rushing forward with fixed bayonets, the Russians charged down upon Ney's column, in front and flank, with such vigour that it was penetrated and, after a most furious hand-to-hand conflict, in which both sides sustained prodigious loss, driven back. The French soldiers poured into Friedland and a bloody battle raged in the streets. Soon the Russians were expelled and the principal buildings were set on fire. At the retreat of the left wing and the guards, however, their flank was uncovered, and the left of Oudinot's grenadiers assailed them on that point with great vigour; but at that moment the Russian cavalry galloped forward at full speed, and charged the French with such fury, that they were trampled down and destroyed. But now the flames of Friedland and the bridges were seen to arise, and the vast volumes of smoke which filled the atmosphere told that their retreat was cut off, and success hopeless. Despair filled their ranks. But with courage unshaken, they united the fronts of their battalions, and closed the ranks of the soldiers, and presented an unbroken front to the enemy. The French artillery, approaching to half cannon-shot distance, ploughed through this dense array, while their infantry threw in incessant and destructive fires of musketry. The death-dealing missiles of the French continued to shower among the fugitives wading through water, breast high, toward the opposite shore, which they finally gained with the greater part of their artillery. The slaughter, during this terrible passage was immense. The French army, wearied with the strife, reposed on the bloody field which they had won. Such was the Battle of Friedland, which, at one blow, destroyed the powerful league of Prussia and Russia against the Emperor of France. It was speedily followed by the peace of Tilsit, by which Russia lost no territory, but Prussia was obliged to surrender nearly half her dominions.

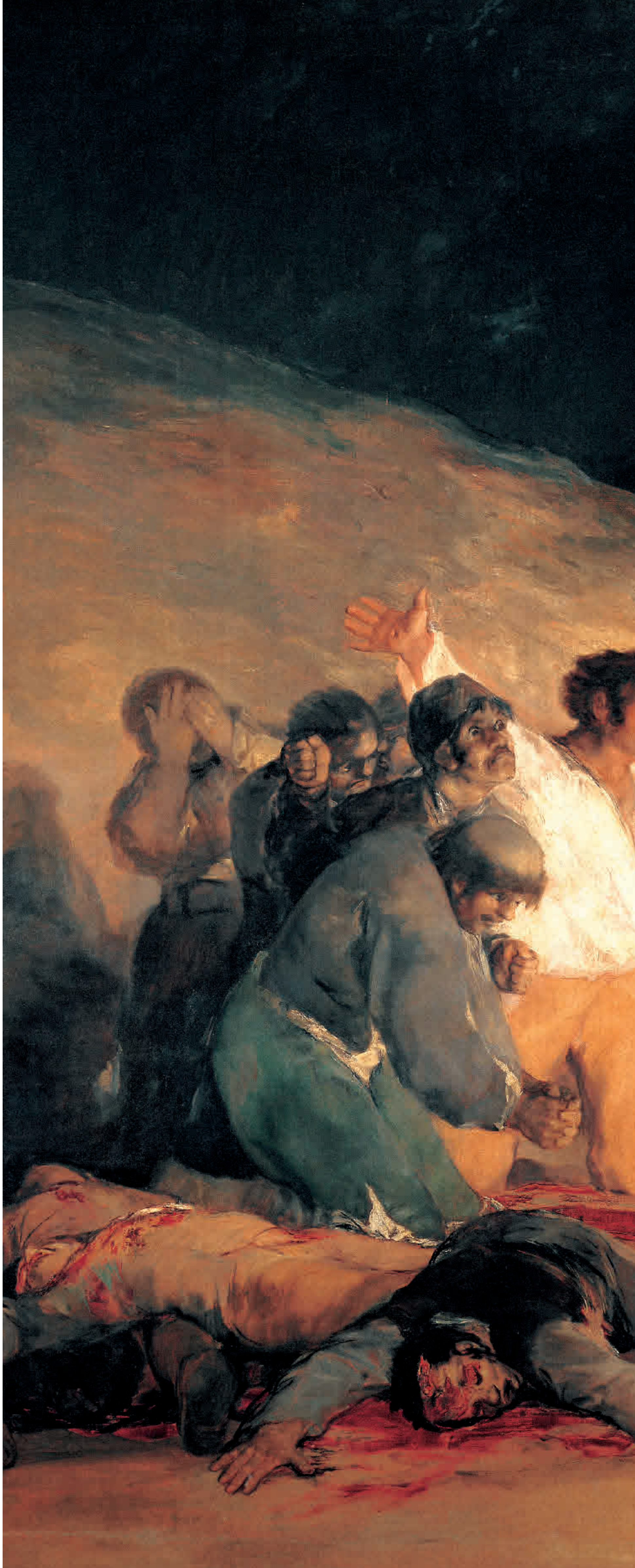
(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Édouard Detaille, *Vive l'Empereur* (Long live the Emperor!), 1891.
Oil on canvas, 376 x 445 cm.
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

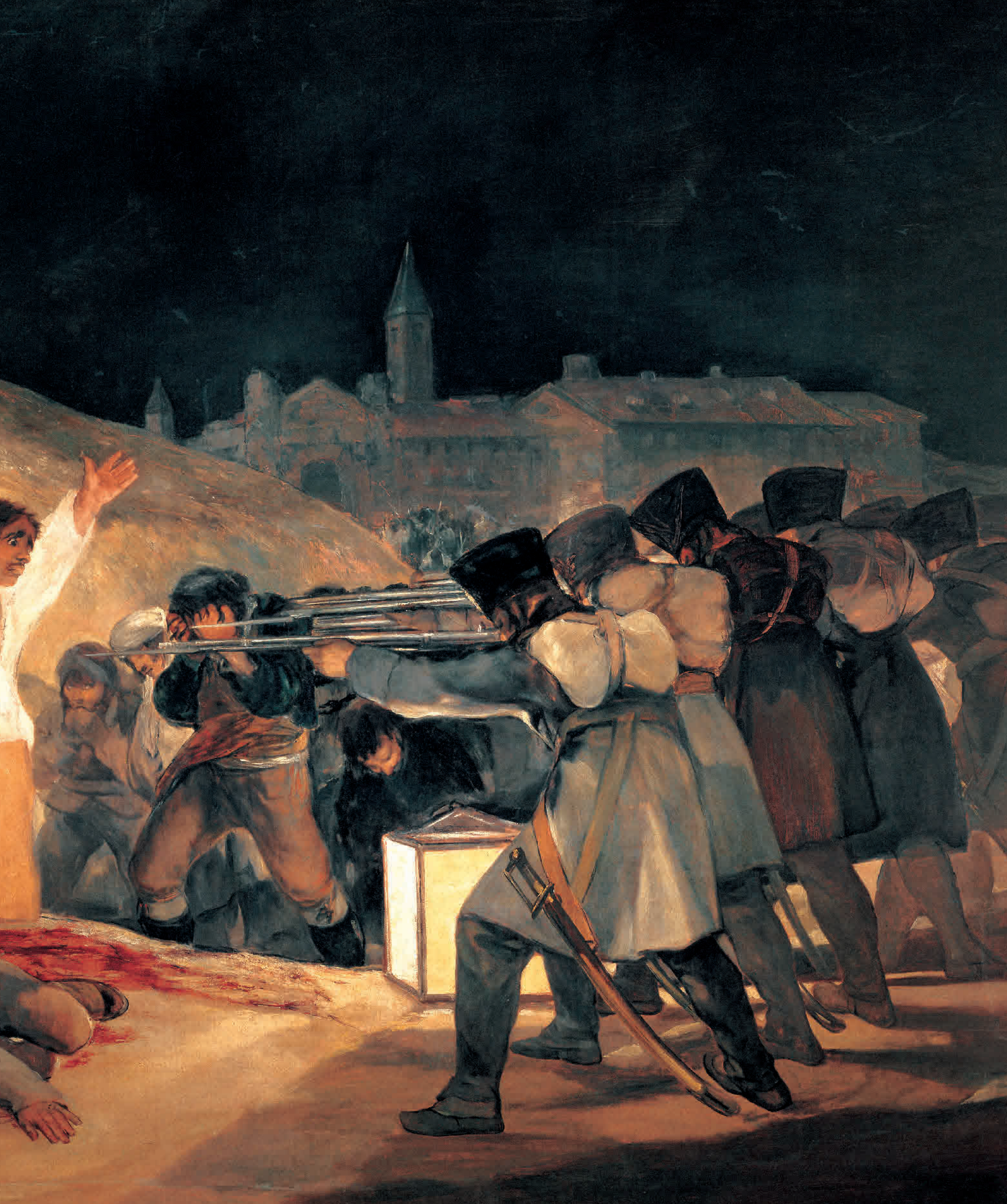
The Third of May 1808

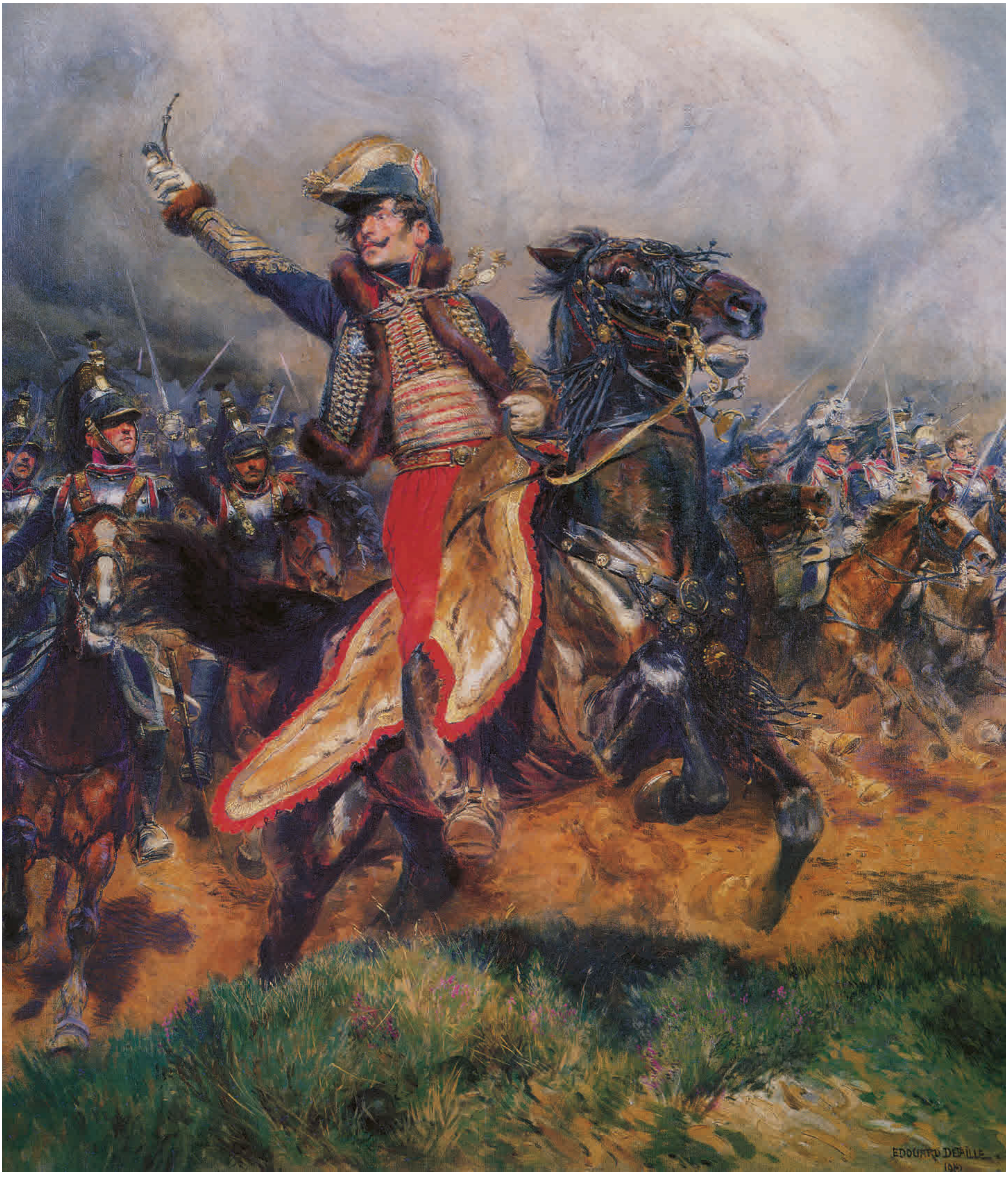
When Goya started his work on *The Third of May 1808* in 1814, he meant to celebrate the Spanish resistance, but at the same time broke with the traditional high art depiction of war. The painting had been commissioned by the Spanish government, on Goya's behest, as a memorial to the Spanish resistance to the French occupation through Napoleonic troops in 1808. The particular incident depicted on the canvas is the aftermath of the unsuccessful *Dos De Mayo Uprising*, during which the people of Madrid rose against the occupational force as a reaction to the plan to exile the last remnants of the Spanish royal family. After the uprising had been quelled, the French army issued heavy reprisals against everyone involved in the incident.

Making heavy use of the *chiaroscuro* effect, Goya makes a lone rebel and a few civilians gathered around him, the focal point of his work. In truth, we do not even know whether the people, the man in the centre in particular, facing the firing squad are even true participants of the uprising or if they are just random stragglers who were swept along in the waves of repercussions, the French army visited upon the people of Madrid – the presence of a monk, an unlikely combatant, identifiable by his tonsure, rather suggests the latter; they remain faceless victims of faceless executioners. There is no place for valiant conduct in battle in this painting. Instead it is replaced by martyrdom – not the noble Christian martyrdom which Goya alludes to, by using *chiaroscuro*, a technique developed by Caravaggio for Christian iconography, but an involuntary martyrdom that is born out of the injustice of random vengeance. Goya paints a bleak, albeit emotionally stirring, picture of the face of war, making *The Third of May 1808* one of the first modern "war paintings".



Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes,
Execution of the Defenders of Madrid, 3rd May, 1808, 1814.
Oil on canvas, 266 x 345 cm.
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.




EDOUARD DETAILLE

Battle of Wagram
(5-6 July, 1809)

Thus one who is skilful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearances, according to which the enemy will act. He sacrifices something, that the enemy may snatch at it. By holding out baits, he keeps him on the march; then with a body of picked men he lies in wait for him. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 5, 19-20)

The Battle of Wagram was one of Napoleon Bonaparte's greatest victories. It was fought in the vicinity of Wagram, a village of the archduchy of Austria, on 6 July, 1809, between the grand army of France and the army of Charles, Archduke of Austria. The battle was one of the most bloody and obstinate of the war. The Austrians were totally defeated, losing over 40,000 men, either killed, wounded imprisoned or missing in action.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

The Emperor was insistent that it was absolutely necessary to stop and to ruin the centre of the Austrian army, where Count Colloredo-Mansfeld commanded. He sent me with orders to the imperial guard, which was in reserve, formed in two lines with all its artillery in front of the first line, to make a change of front with the right before, which would place it in an oblique direction facing the villages of Wagram and Aderkla. I carried this order, and followed the movement of the artillery, at the head of which was General d'Aboville. General Lauriston took the command; at this moment the gunners dragged the guns down the hill, and continued a terrible fire, which crushed and drove back the masses of the Austrian infantry. The corn, already dry, was set on fire in many places by the shells, which increased the confusion. The Emperor, placed on the hill behind the great battery, observed attentively the attack on the plateau of Margrave Neusiedel, which was at the distance of three quarters of a league. At this very moment an aide-de-camp of Marshal Massena came to announce to him the progress of the enemy's right wing, the retreat of Boudet's division, and the loss of its artillery. "If Boudet's artillery is taken, it is because it was there for that purpose; go and tell Massena that the battle is gained." And so indeed it was; since Marshal Davoust, having formed his divisions on the plateau, took in flank the whole corps of the Prince de Rosenburg, and forced it upon the centre, while General Oudinot and the Prince Viceroy passed the rivulet, ascended the height, and attacked at the point of the bayonet the battalions of the mass of infantry which had just been overwhelmed by the great battery of the guard.

The Archduke Charles had already made his arrangements for the retreat, but he would hardly have executed it, and the Battle of Wagram would have had very different results for the French if the charge of cavalry which the Emperor had ordered, had been executed at the decisive moment. The left wing of the Austrian army abandoned to Marshal Davoust all this part of the field of battle, and made its retreat by the road to Nicolsburg. Marshal Massena, who had renewed the combat, pressed it, as much as the numerous artillery, which covered the enemy's movement, would permit. The French cavalry suffered much by the fire of this artillery, and by that of the squares of the Austrian infantry, which retreated in good order. It was there that the brave General Lasalle was killed.

(adapted from: *Memoirs of his Own Time; Including the Revolution, the Empire and the Restoration* by G-M. Dumas)

Édouard Detaille, *General Antoine-Charles-Louis Lasalle*, 1912.
Oil on canvas, 180 x 160 cm.
Musée de l'Armée, Paris.

Battle of Borodino

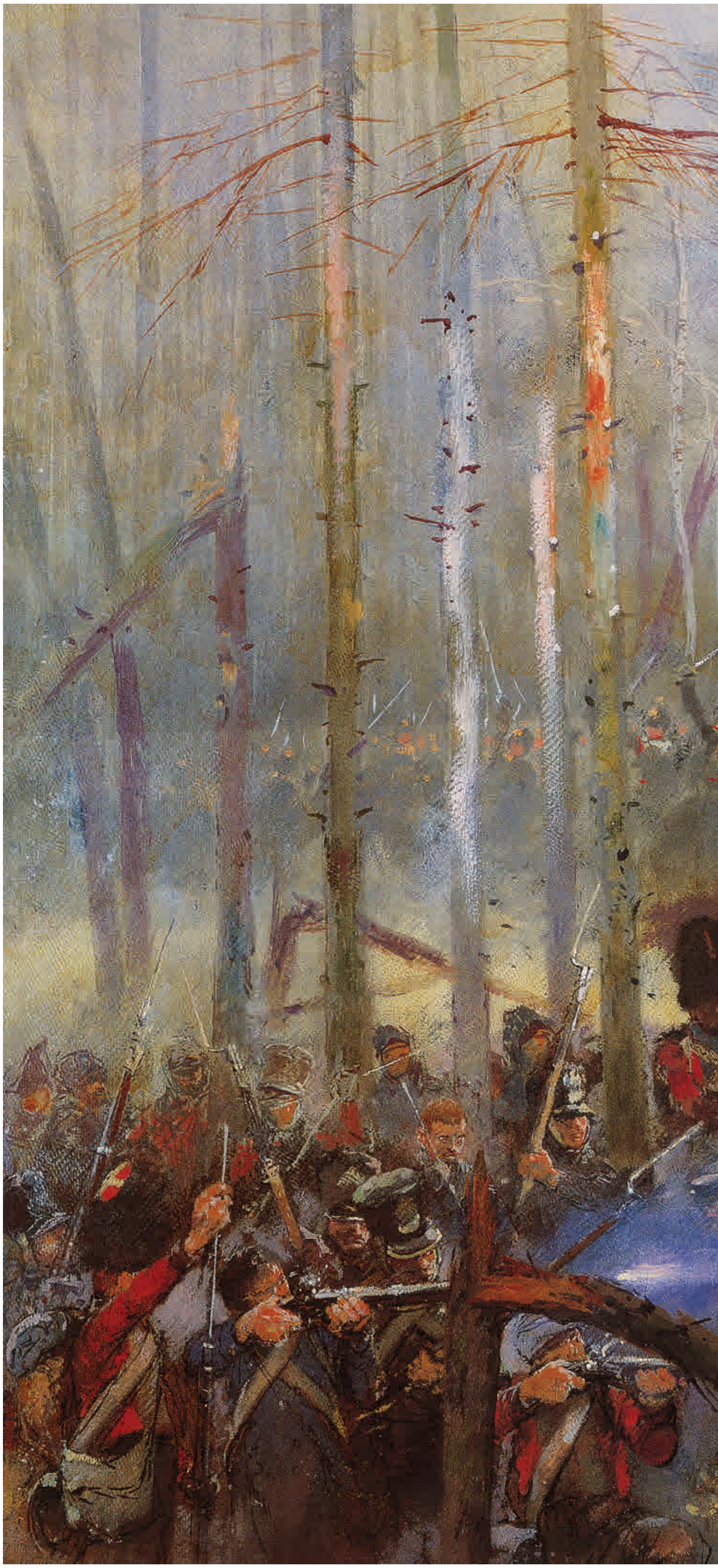
(7 September, 1812)

Thus it may be known that the leader of armies is the arbiter of the people's fate, the man on whom it depends whether the nation shall be in peace or in peril. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 2, 20)

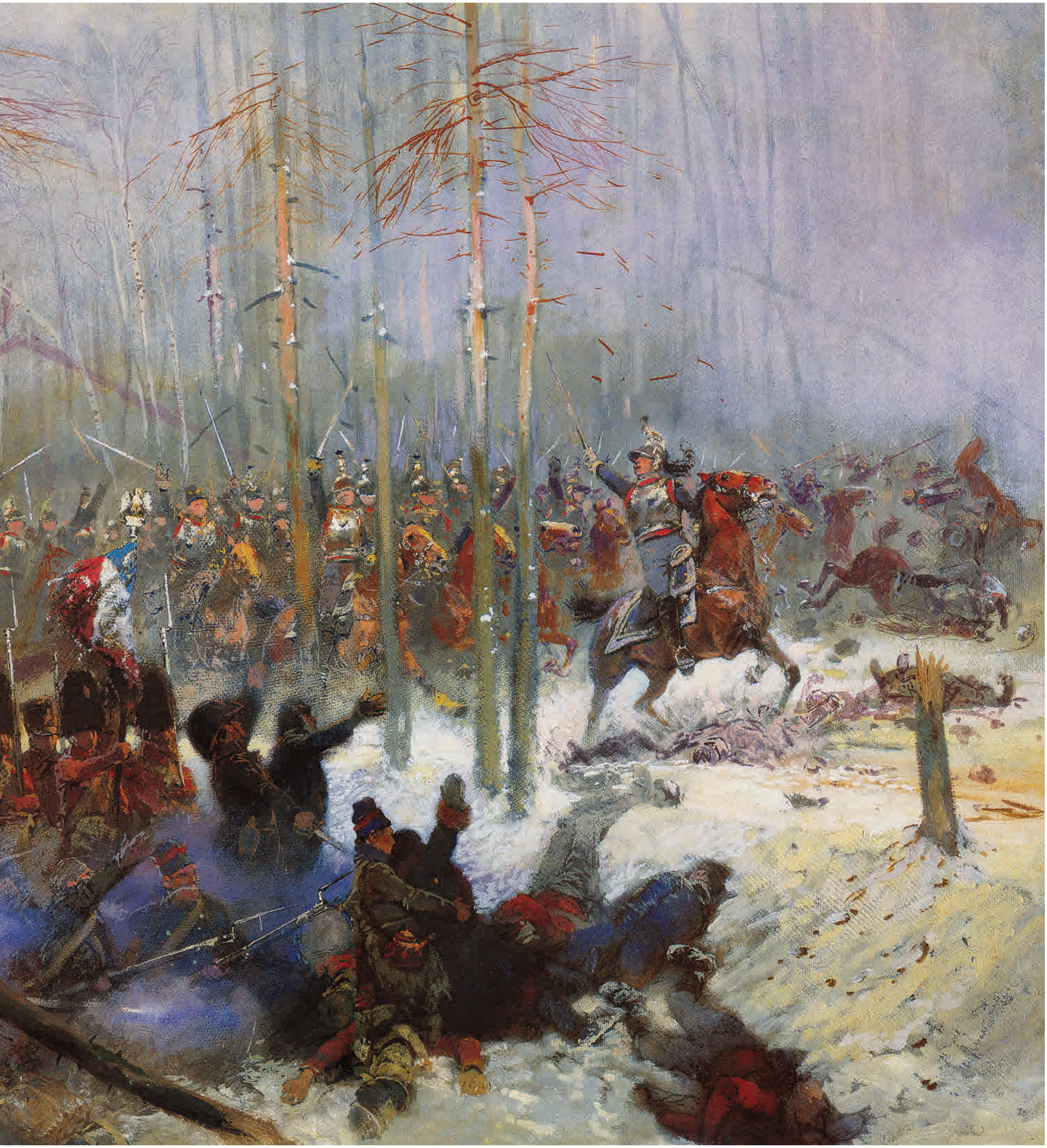
Borodino is a small village of Russia, ten miles west from Mojaisk. Napoleon was marching toward Moscow; he resolved to attack from the right by echelon, and disposed his masses to act accordingly. As they marched over the plain, the grapeshot from the Russian batteries swept through them, demolishing entire battalions as they approached; but the survivors steadily and firmly advanced with an unbroken front against the rampart of death. The Russian general Bagrathion ordered the whole left wing to issue from their entrenchments, and now a terrible scene occurred in the plain; 80,000 men, and 700 pieces of cannon, accumulated in a small space, strove with unparalleled fury, for above an hour. In the meantime, Napoleon resolved to make a desperate effort to regain his advantages in the centre. For this purpose more than 200 pieces of cannon were directed against the great redoubt.

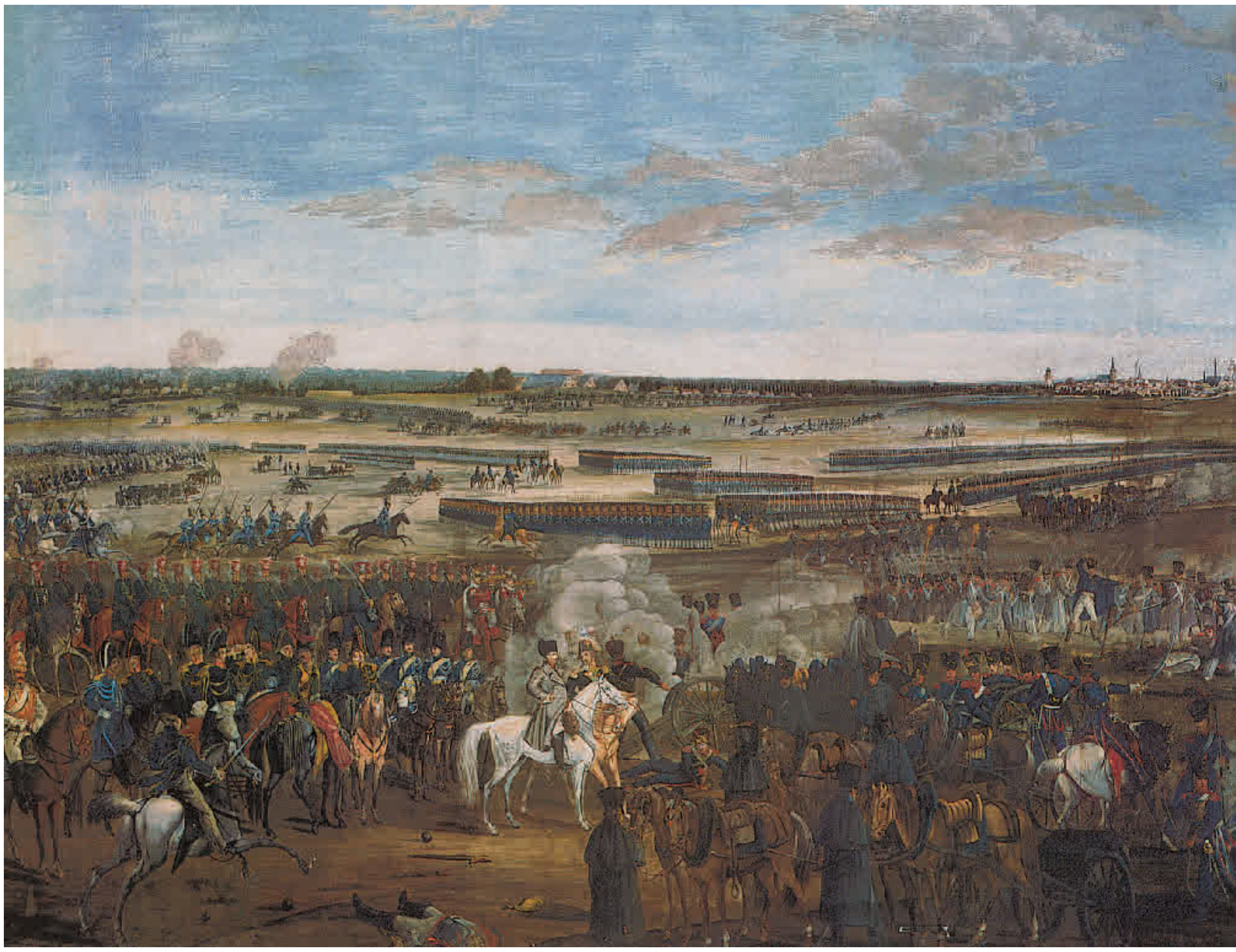
In the evening, after an obstinate struggle, the French carried the position. Thus the Russians, at the close of day, had lost their original position and on the succeeding day they retreated on the great real to Moscow. The dreadful loss on both sides demonstrated the unparalleled obstinacy of the battle. The Russians lost one of their bravest and ablest generals, Prince Bagrathion, who fell severely wounded while defending the redoubts on the left, and subsequently died of his wounds. The very different sources account for 24,000-30,000 losses on the Russian side and about 44,000-58,000 casualities on the French side, including Generals Monbum, Caulaincourt, and others, as well as 30 generals wounded.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)



Édouard Detaille,
Charge of the Cuirassiers in Russia, 1900.
Oil on canvas.
Musée de l'Armée, Paris.





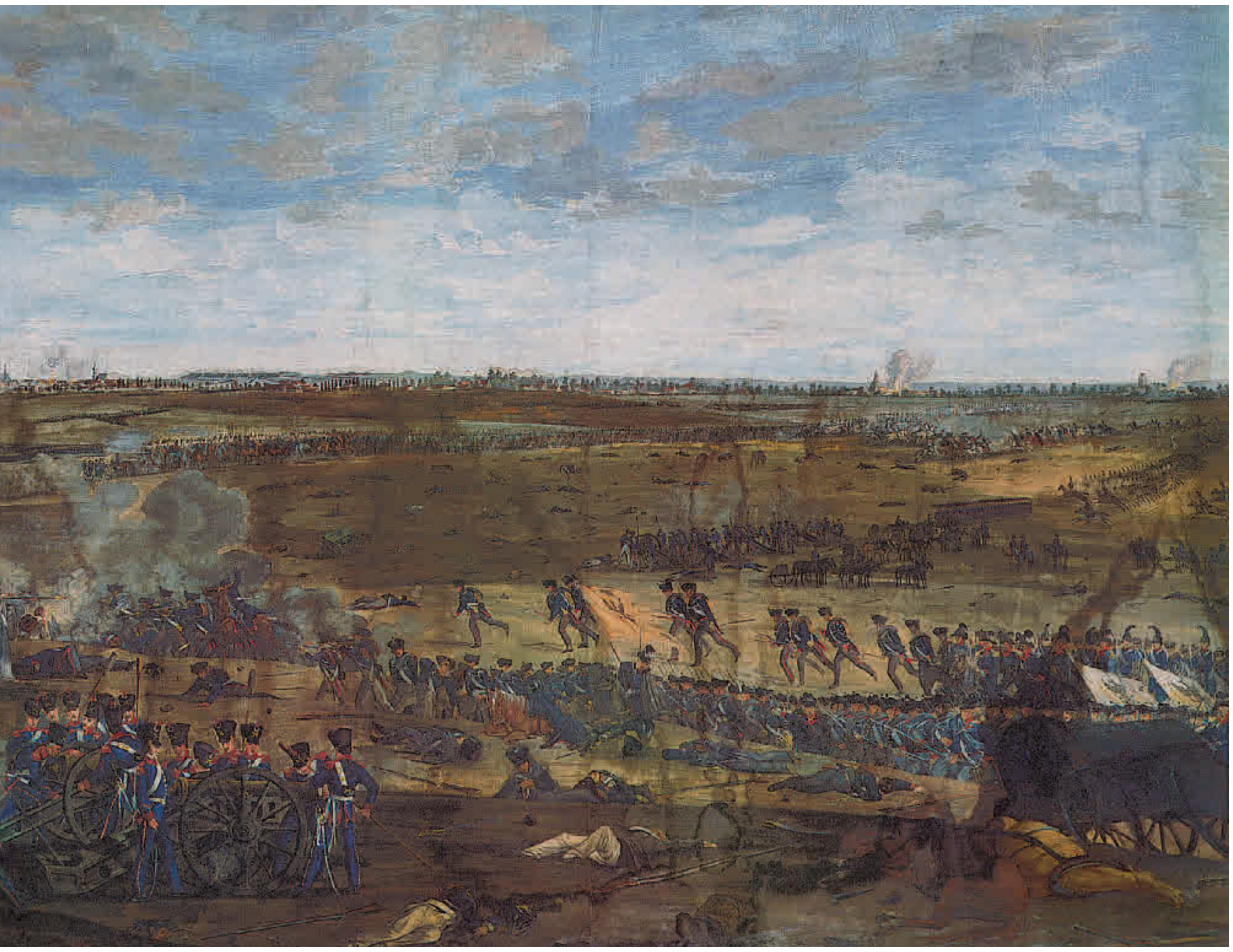
Battle of Leipzig

(16-19 October, 1813)

For it is precisely when a force has fallen into harm's way that is capable of striking a blow for victory. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 59)

At about nine o'clock the action became general, and the thunder of artillery shook the air. Napoleon, who arrived at noon on the heights behind Wachau, resolved to put in force his favourite measure of a grand attack on the allied enemy's centre, who were unable to resist this desperate attack. Napoleon's troops, preceded by the terrible battery, rapidly gained ground; and Napoleon deeming the battle gained, rang the bells of Leipzig in honour of victory. Schwartzenberg, seeing his centre so nearly forced by the impetuous attack of the French Guard, ordered up the Austrian reserve, under Prince Hesse-Homberg, from Zobigker. However, the fire from the batteries on the summit was so vehement, that the assaulting regiments paused at the foot of the hill. Napoleon hastened to the spot. "What regiment is that?" said he to Charpentier. "The 22nd light infantry," replied the general. "That is impossible," said Napoleon; "the 22nd would never allow themselves to be cut down by grapeshot, without taking their muskets from their shoulders." These words being repeated to the regiment, they were so stung by the reproach, that, breaking into a charge, they ran up the hill, and carried the post; which gave the French a decisive advantage in that part of the field.

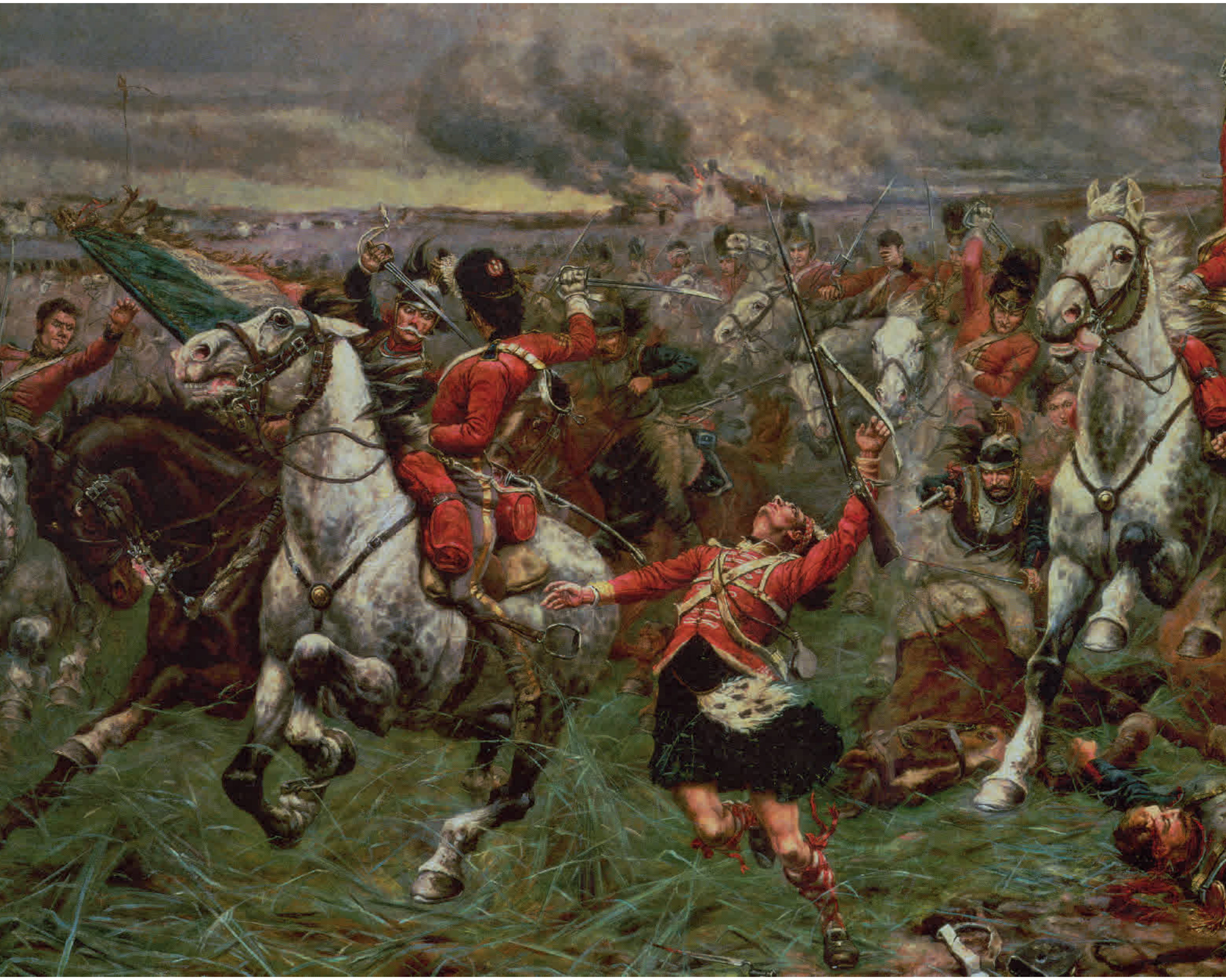
Though the brave Latour Maubourg had his leg carried off by a cannon-shot, the ponderous mass advanced in admirable order under Bordesoult, broke by a charge in flank Prince Eugene of Wurttemberg's infantry, routed ten light squadrons of the Russian Guard, which strove to arrest its progress, and captured twenty-six guns. So violent was the onset, so complete the opening

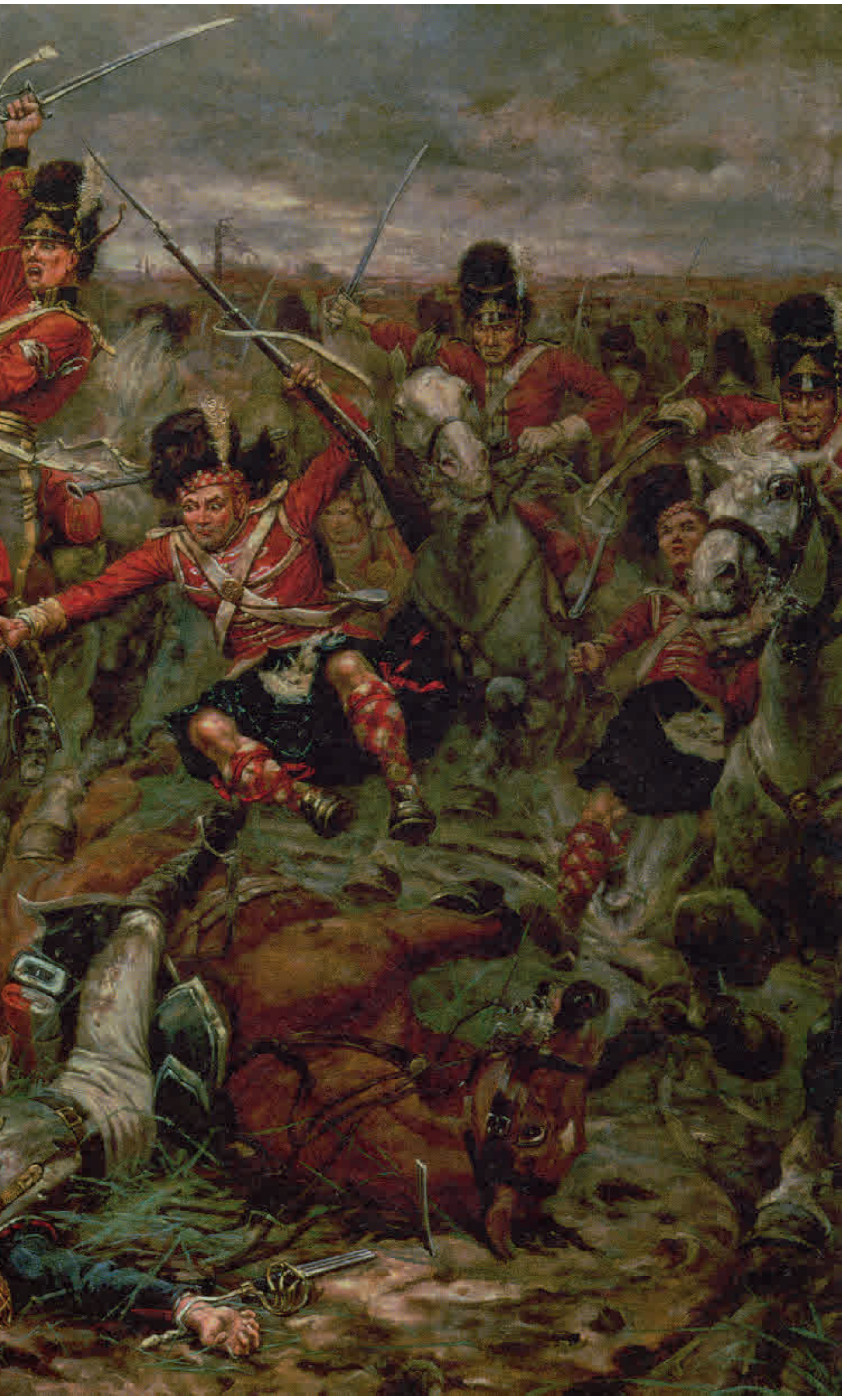


made in the centre of the allies, by this terrible charge, that the French horsemen pushed on to the position where the Emperor Alexander and King of Prussia had taken their station, and they were obliged to mount on horseback, and retire a little distance to the rear, to avoid being made prisoners. Napoleon resolved to make one more effort for victory; with this view, between five and six o'clock, he re-formed his reserve cavalry behind Lieberwolkwitz. Victor and Lauriston's corps were thrown into a deep column of attack, and preceded by a numerous array of artillery, advanced against Gossa. The French drove madly to the charge, opening their artillery as they advanced, threw the corps of Gorzakow into confusion, and took Gossa; but Schwartzenberg, bringing up the Prussian division of Pirsch, assailed the French so vigorously that the village was re-taken, and the enemy's column driven back. Meanwhile, a powerful Russian battery of eighty pieces of the Guard, by the precision and rapidity of their fire, arrested the progress of the French in that quarter. Excessive fatigue prevented either party from making any further efforts in the centre and left. Late in the evening, Meerfeldt, at the head of the leading battalion, advanced to attack the French right flank near Mark-Kleberg, when he was assailed by a division of the Old Guard, and Poniatowsky's Poles in flank, and driven, with great loss, into the Elster. Meerfeldt himself, with a whole battalion, was made prisoner. But the French, fighting for Lindenau, their only line of retreat in case of disaster, finally drove the Austrians back, and kept the communication with the grand army free from obstruction.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

The Battle of Leipzig, 18th October 1813, 19th century.
Gouache on paper, 101 x 235 cm.
Bibliothèque Marmotton, Boulogne-Billancourt, Paris.





Battle of Waterloo

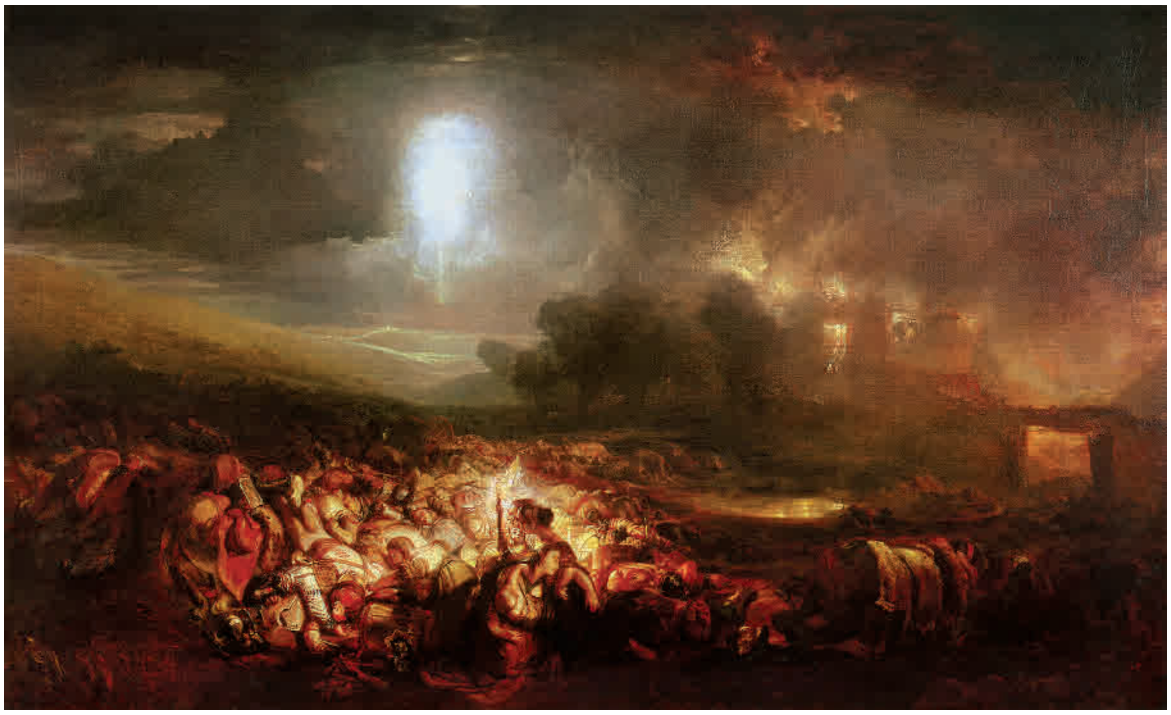
(18 June, 1815)

Carefully compare the opposing army with your own, so that you may know where strength is superabundant and where it is deficient. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 6, 24)

The French and British armies lay on the open field during the wet and stormy night of 17 June; and on the dawning of 18 June, the rain was still descending heavily upon Waterloo. It was, indeed, an awful calm before the coming storm, when armed myriads stood gazing on their armed foes, scanning their number, their array, their probable powers of resistance and destruction, and listening with throbbing hearts for the momentarily expected note of death.

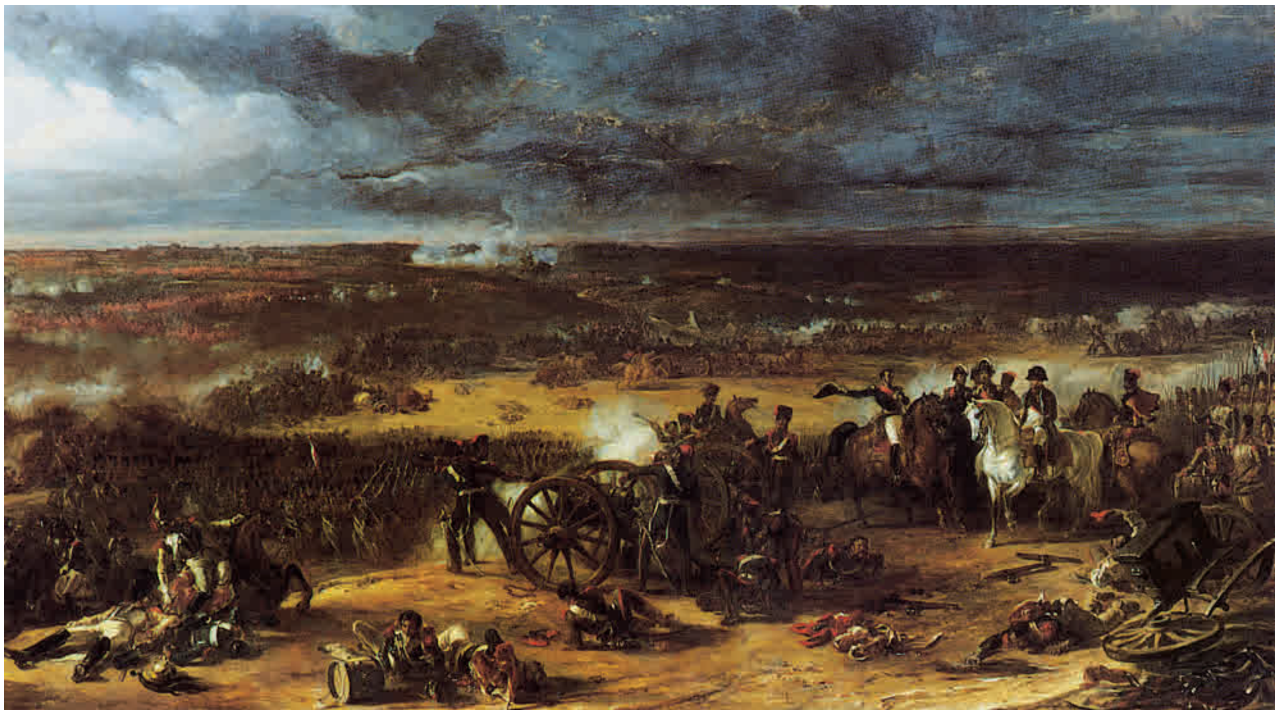
At last, at about half-past eleven, Napoleon began the battle by directing a powerful force from his left wing under his brother, Prince Jerome, to attack Hougoumont. Column after column of the French now descended from the west of the southern heights, and assailed that post with fiery valour, which was encountered with the most determined bravery. The cannonade, which commenced at first between the British right and the French left, in consequence of the attack on Hougoumont, soon became general along both lines. The French reeled back in confusion. Pack's infantry had checked the other two columns, and down came a whirlwind of British cavalrymen on the whole mass, sending them staggering from the crest of the hill and cutting them down by whole battalions. Napoleon's grand effort to break the English left centre had thus completely failed. Grouchy was, in fact, now engaged at Wavre with his whole force against Thielman's single Prussian corps, while the other three corps of the Prussian army were moving without opposition, save from the difficulties of the ground, upon Waterloo.

Stanley Berkeley, *Waterloo: Gordons and Greys to the Front, 18th June 1815*, 1898.
Oil on canvas, 155 x 245 cm.
Private collection.



It was now about half-past three, and though Wellington's army had suffered severely by the unremitting cannonade and in the late desperate encounter, no part of the British position had been forced. Napoleon determined to try what effect he could produce on the British centre and right by charges of his splendid cavalry, brought on in such force that the duke's cavalry could not check them. There was no time to be lost: Blucher and Bulow were beginning to press upon the French right; as early as five o'clock. Napoleon had been obliged to detach Lobau's infantry and Domont's horse to check these new enemies. They succeeded in doing so for a time; but, as large numbers of the Prussians came on the field, they turned Lobau's right flank, and sent a strong force to seize the village of Planchenoit, which, it will be remembered, lay in the rear of the French right. Other Prussian forces were now appearing on the field nearer to the English left, whom also Napoleon kept in check by troops detached for that purpose. Thus a large part of the French army was now thrown back on a line at right angles with the line of that portion which still confronted and assailed the English position. But this portion was now numerically inferior to the force under the Duke of Wellington. Now that the crisis of the battle was evidently approaching, Napoleon mounted a white Persian charger, which he rode in action because the troops easily recognised him by the horse's colour. He had still the means of effecting a retreat. His Old Guard had yet taken no part in the action. A victory at Waterloo was his only alternative from utter ruin, and he determined to employ his Guard in one bold stroke more to make that victory his own. The line of march of the columns of the Guard was directed between Hougoumont

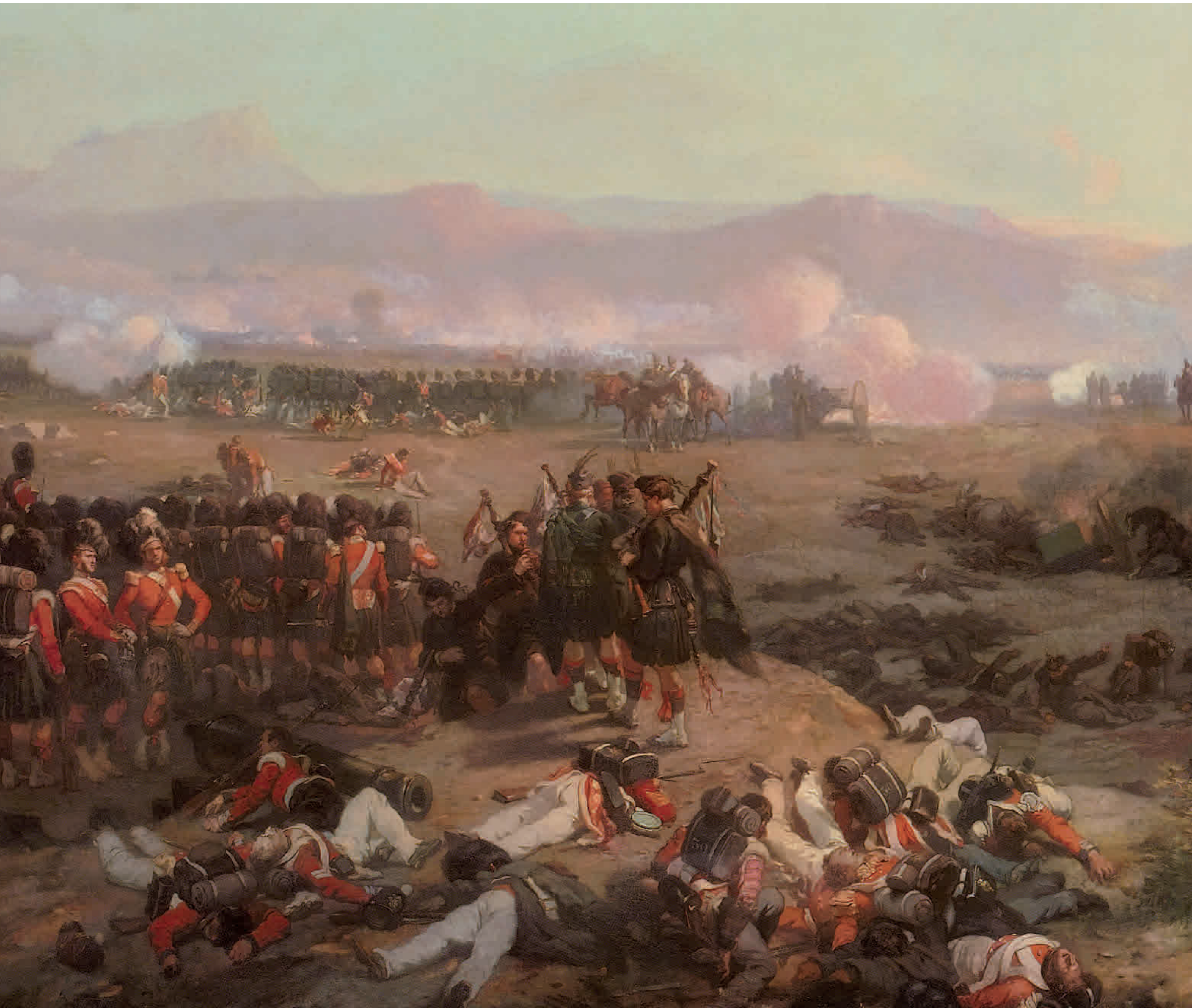
J.M.W. Turner, *The Field of Waterloo*, 1818 (exhibited).
Oil on canvas, 147.3 x 239 cm.
Tate Britain, London.



and La Haye Sainte, against the British right centre; and at the same time, Donzelot and the French, who had possession of La Haye Sainte, commenced a fierce attack upon the British centre, a little more to its left. The front of the massy column now was on the ridge of the hill. To their surprise, they saw no troops before them. "Up, Guards, and at them!" It was the duke who gave the order; and at the words, as if by magic, up started before them a line of the British Guards four deep, and in the most compact and perfect order. Maitland's brigade kept showering in volley after volley with deadly rapidity. The sight of the Old Guard broken and in flight checked the ardour which Donzelot's troops had hitherto displayed. And, indeed, almost the whole of the French host were now in irreparable confusion. The Prussian army was coming more and more rapidly forward on their right; and the Young Guard, which had held Planchenoit so bravely, was at last compelled to give way. They were swept away and wrecked among the waves of the flyers. Napoleon cleared the throng of fugitives and escaped from the scene of the battle and the war, which he and France had lost past all recovery. The daylight was now entirely gone; but the young moon had risen, and the light which it cast, aided by the glare from the burning houses and other buildings in the line of the flying French and pursuing Prussians, enabled the duke to assure himself that his victory was complete. The overthrow of the French military power at Waterloo was so complete that the subsequent events of the brief campaign have little interest.

(adapted from: *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World: from Marathon to Waterloo* by E.S. Creasy)

Sir William Allan, *Waterloo, June 18, 1815*, 1843.
Oil on panel, 118 x 310 cm.
Apsley House, The Wellington Museum, London.



Conflicts of the 19th Century

Third Siege of Missolonghi

(15 April, 1825 – 10 April, 1826)

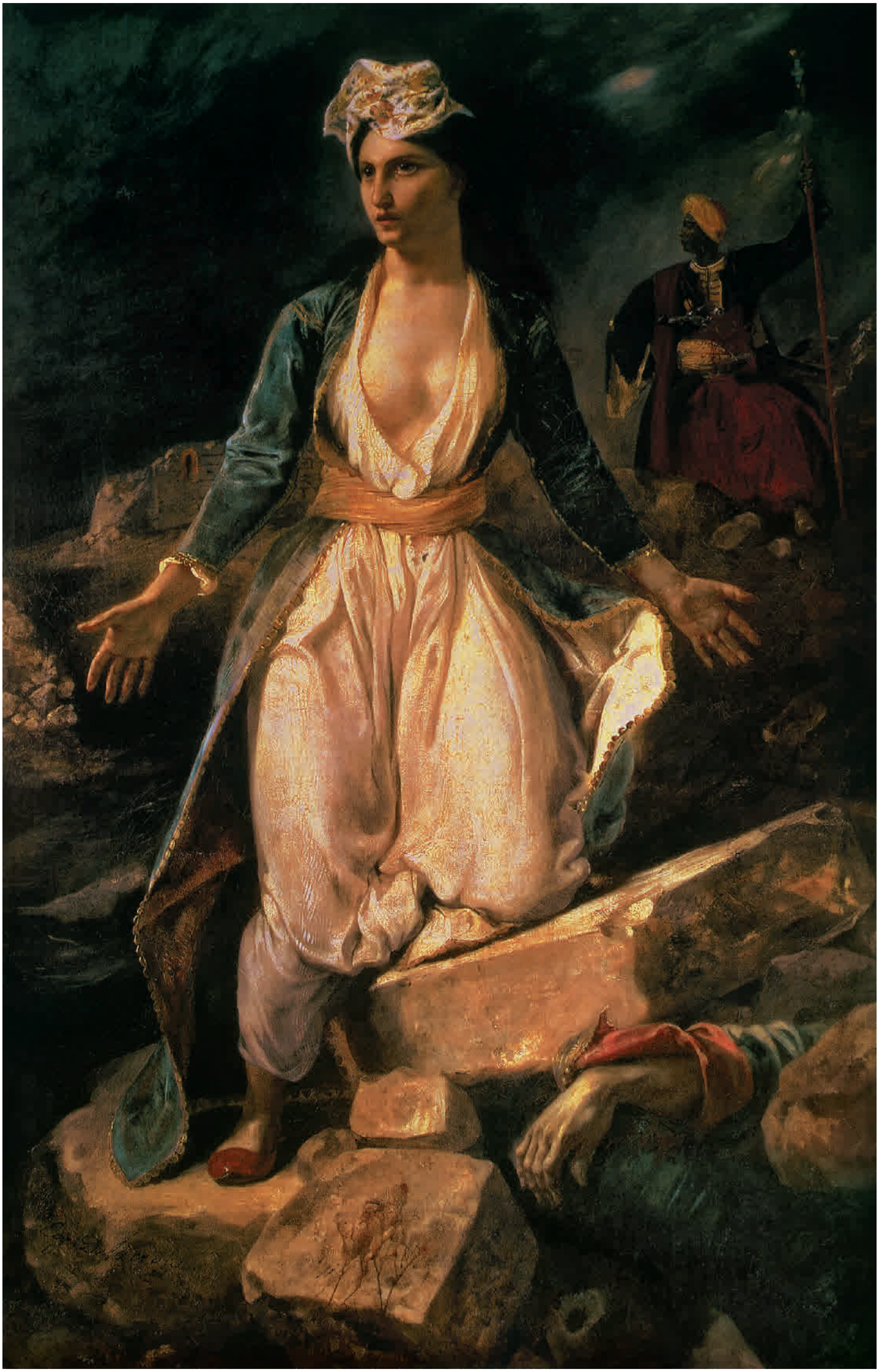
The bravery and self-devotion of the unfortunate Greeks was exhibited in an extraordinary degree at the siege of Missolonghi; after having been disappointed in all their hopes of aid, feeling their ramparts crumbling under their feet, seeing their fathers, their wives, and their children, perishing by famine, the garrison sent a communication to the only corps which was able to give them any succour, that of Kairaskakai. They requested it to attack the rear of the enemy on a certain day, and to announce its arrival by a general discharge of musketry, at which moment the garrison would make a sortie, and endeavour to cut their way through the besieging army. On the appointed day, the population of Missolonghi was assembled. There remained three thousand soldiers (including those who, although sick or wounded, were capable of marching with the assistance of their comrades), a thousand artificers or other men unused to fighting, and about five thousand women and children. The Grecian women, who, fancied themselves strong enough to brave the fatigue and danger of the sortie, dressed themselves in men's clothes, in order that if they were unable to escape, the enemy, they might be mistaken for soldiers, and put to death instantly. The attention of the conquerors was soon drawn to the powder magazine. The size and the solidity of the building induced them to believe that the wealth of the inhabitants had been there deposited. It contained, however only women and children, and Kapsalis (one of the town's patriarchs) who, having obstinately refused to accompany the garrison in their projected sortie, conducted to the powder-magazine a crowd of women and children. At length, Kapsalis, perceiving that a vast number had assembled, uttered a brief prayer familiar to the Greeks – "Lord, remember me!" and applied the match. The explosion was so violent, that the neighbouring houses were thrown down, large chasms were produced in the earth, and the sea, moved from its bed, inundated part of the town.

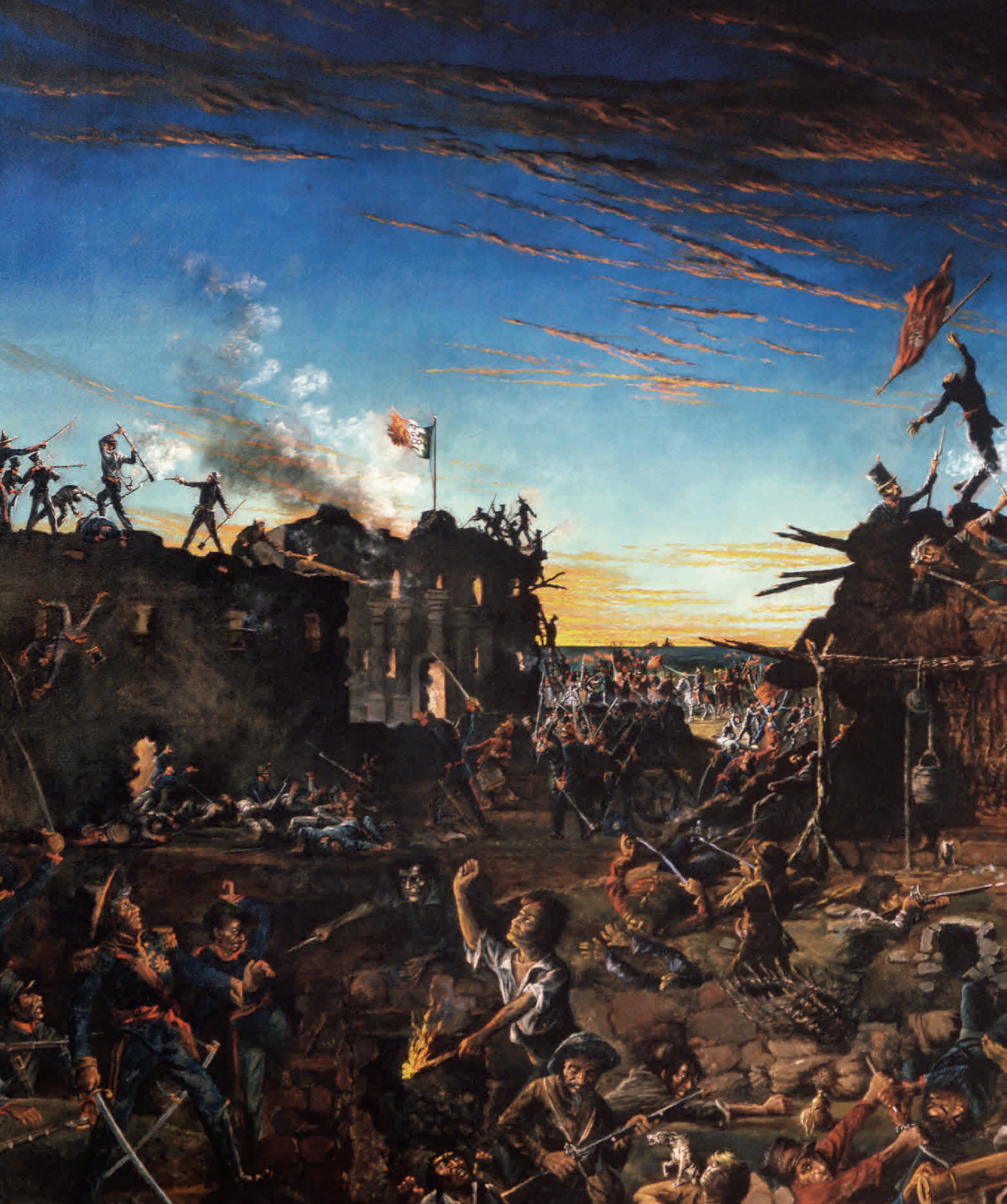
(adapted from: *Tales of the Wars; or, Naval and Military Chronicle* by W.M. Clark)

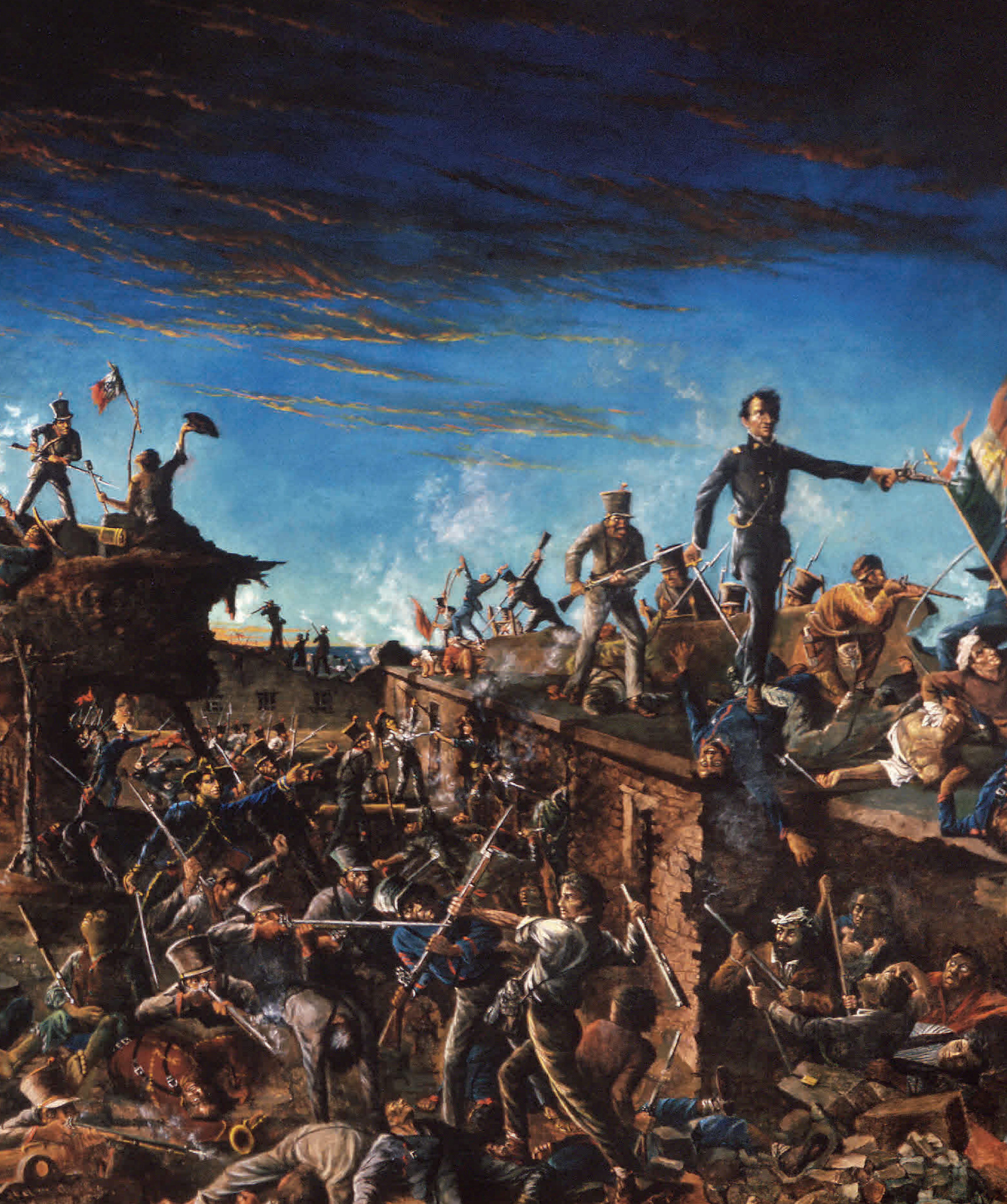
In the mid-1820s a wave of sympathy for the Greek war of independence swept through Europe. Although it would take the European powers several years of political manoeuvring in the midst of conflicting interests to mediate and send aid, the general public was almost uniformly fascinated by the Greek resolution to shake off the yoke of Ottoman rule. This fascination was also reflected in the arts. English poet Lord Byron even went as far as travelling to Greece, spending parts of his inheritance to fund the revolution and joining the cause in person. Italian composer Gioacchino Rossini wrote an opera specifically about the 3rd Siege of Missolonghi, while in France, Eugène Delacroix expressed his sympathy with the war by creating two oil-paintings: *Massacre at Chios* (1824; Musée du Louvre, Paris) and *Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi* (opposite). Although the *Massacre* painting became quickly popular and was generally well-received, critics still were put off by the sombre tone and the "realism" of the depicted atrocity. *Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi* is only slightly less sombre with its showing of a crushed resistance fighter, but exhibits a considerably higher tendency towards pathos. Greece as a whole is embodied by one of the women who decided to wear male clothing (as previously mentioned). She is holding the palms of her hands outwards in a gesture of surrender, accepting the inevitability of defeat but still retaining the unbroken spirit of the Greek people.

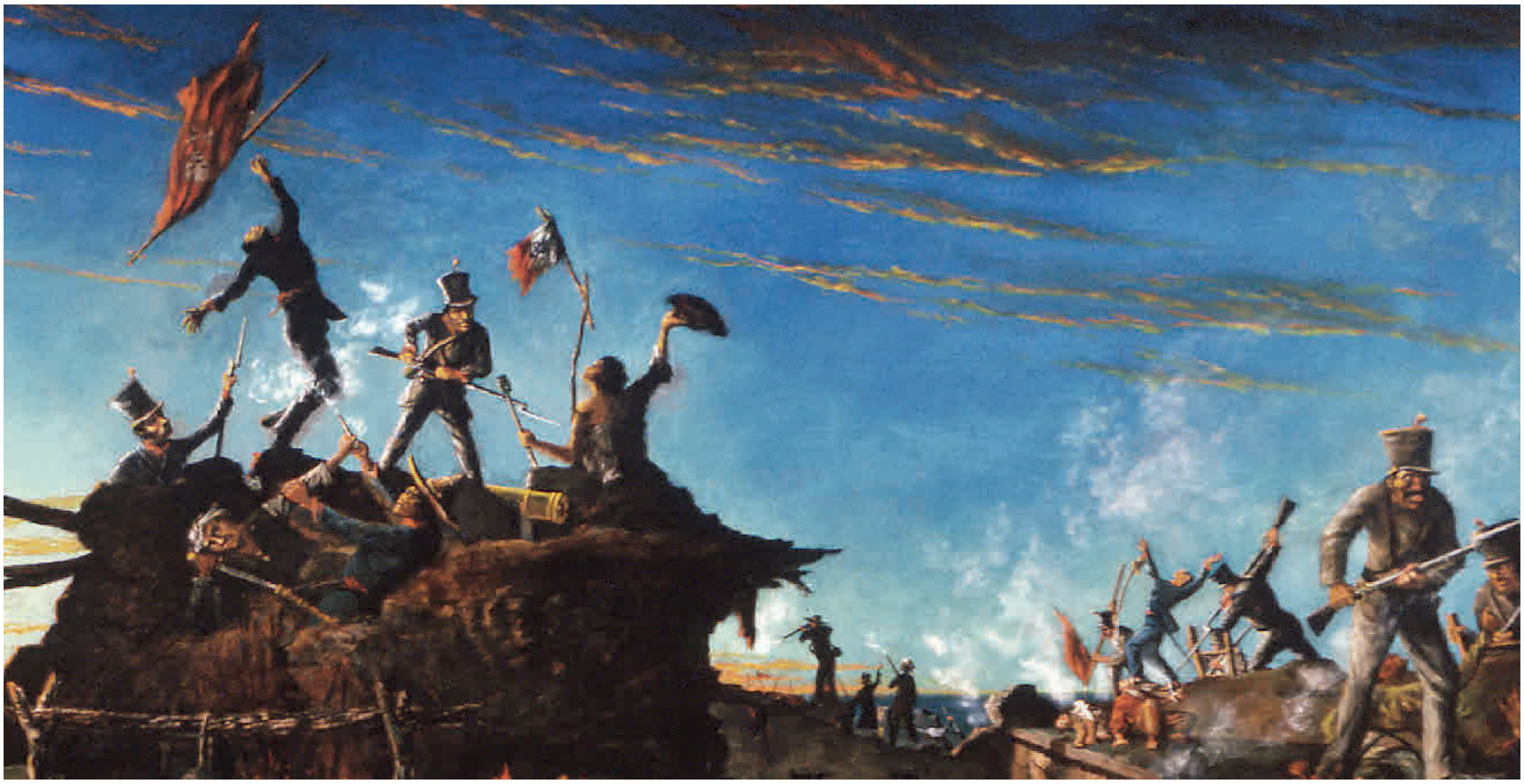
Eugène Lami, *Battle of Alma, 20 September 1854*, 1855.
Oil on canvas, 130 x 225 cm. Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles. (pp. 196-197)

Eugène Delacroix, *Greece Expiring on the Ruins of Missolonghi*, 1827.
Oil on canvas, 213 x 142 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux.









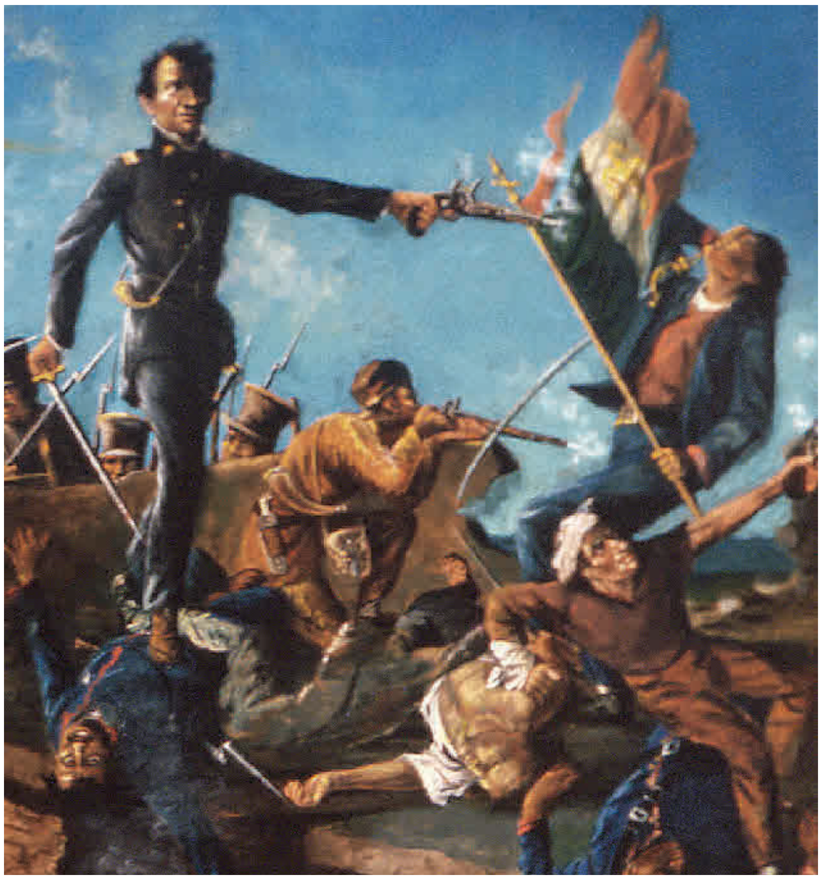
Battle of the Alamo

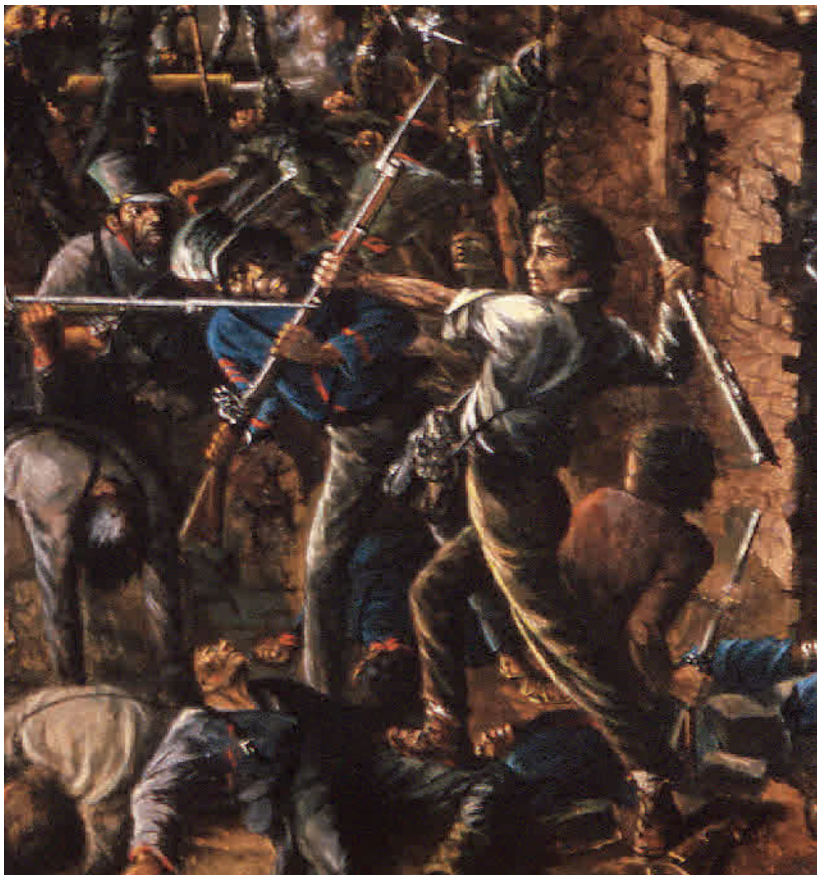
(23 February – 6 March, 1836)

Pop, pop, pop! Bom, bom, bom! throughout the day. No time for memorandums now. Go ahead! Liberty and Independence forever. (Davy Crockett, diary entry of 5 March 1836)

On 22 February, 1836, General and Mexican President Santa Anna arrived at San Antonio with the first brigade of the Mexican army, which he was commanding in person. Built in 1744, the Alamo, in spite of the peaceful purpose of its original building, had been made strong enough to resist any attack except from artillery. Colonel Travis, the commander-in-chief was himself little more than an improvised soldier, and it is supposed that he had little control over his men, who had never faced a disciplined body of troops. Captain Smith, with more than thirty men, responded to Travis' appeal; The second in command was James Bowie, and with him was Davy Crockett, a tall, powerful, fearless hunter from Tennessee.

General Santa Anna at once began work by setting up two batteries of artillery and sent five entrenched camps to command the mission from different points and guard against all attempts to force a way out. On 4 March, the third Mexican brigade arrived. This brought Santa Anna's forces to the number of 3,000 men, well-trained and organised. The next day was Sunday. At four o'clock in the morning the Mexican columns advanced in silence, but suddenly the bugle sounded, and the Mexicans made a first rush forward. The twelve cannons and all the rifles of the garrison spoke together, and the assailants fell back in disorder. Then a united attack was made from the north,



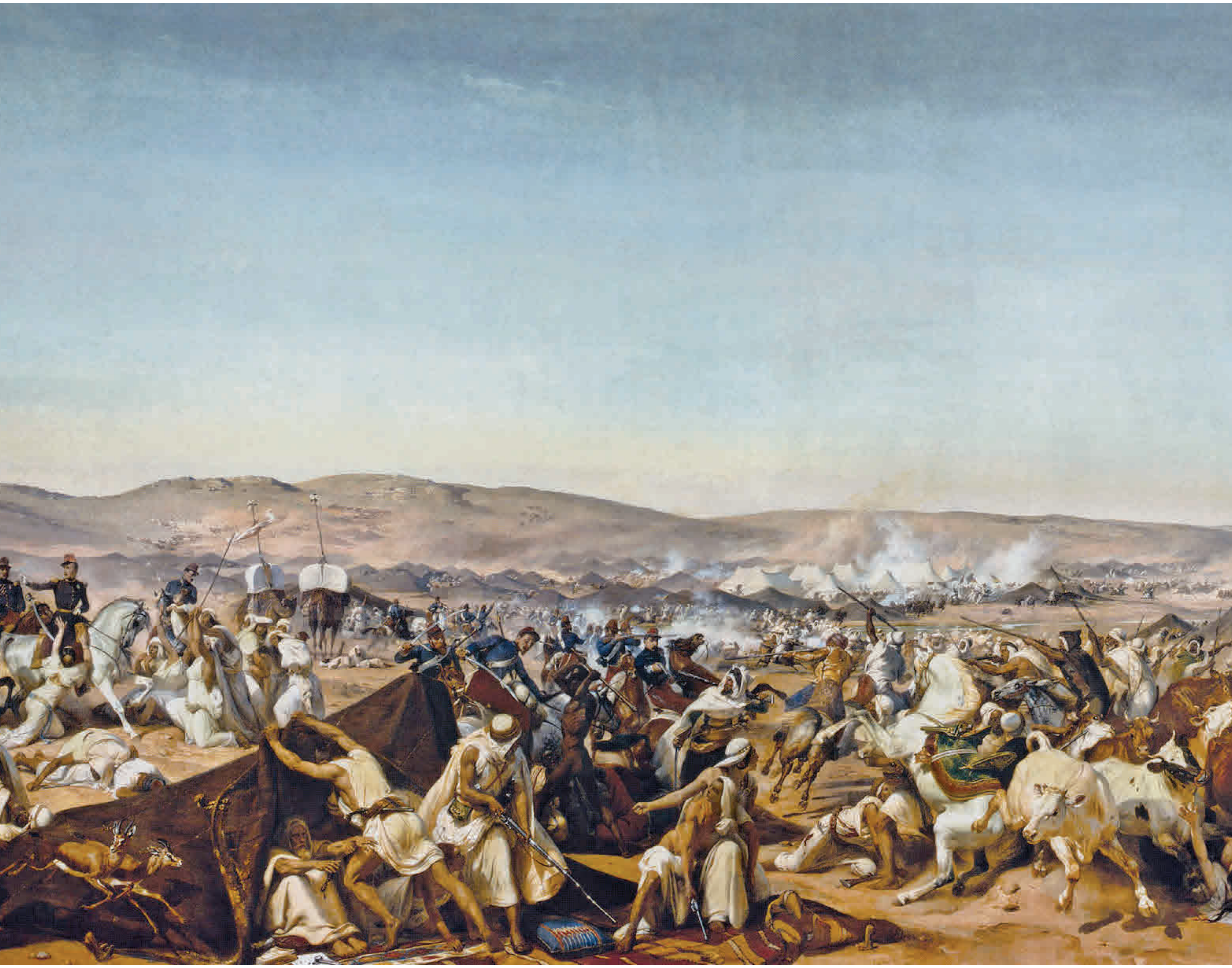


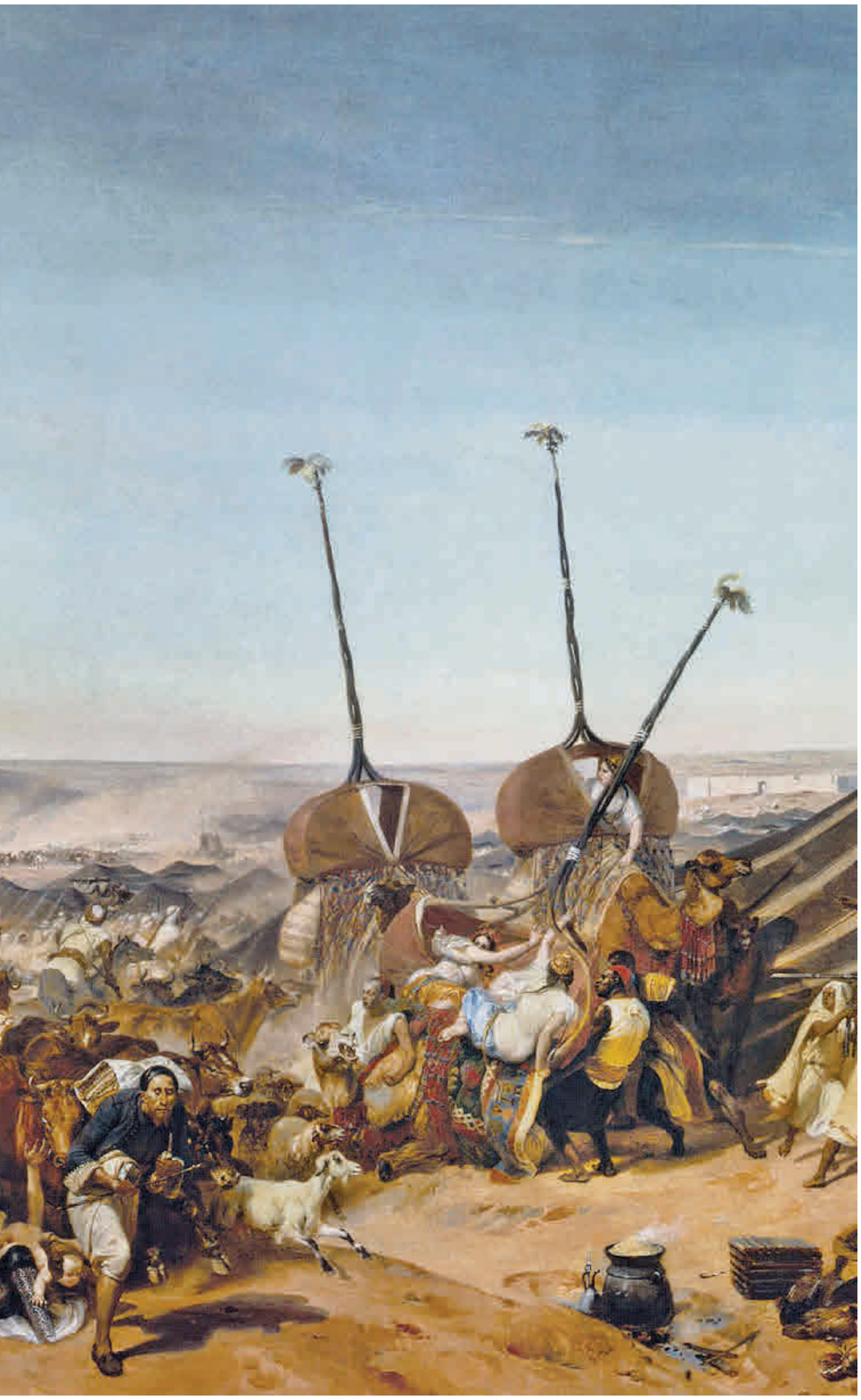
and again the Texan fire wrought havoc and carnage in the dense mass of troops. But this last move had brought the attacking party below the range of the cannon on the walls. Travis, struck in the head, had fallen beside his gun at the north-west corner. A third assault was at once made. This time the wall was scaled and the breach enlarged.

The soldiers poured into the Mission Square faster than the Texan rifles could pick them off. Soon their own cannon were directed against them, amid the increasing fire of the Mexican musketry. Apartment after apartment was forced. There ensued a series of hand-to-hand fights, ending in death-struggles, as the successive groups of Texans were overborne by superior numbers. Through the convent cells, built for peace, the Mexican soldiers charged with fixed bayonets, only to be met by the clubbed rifles and flashing knives of their victims driven to bay. Early in the fight Bowie had fallen from a scaffolding by the walls, and received such injuries that he was unable to move from the bed where he had been laid in an upper room of the convent barracks. But he was still able to die as he had lived, firing the pistols which had been placed by his side before he was finally run through with a bayonet. The church was the last to be taken. One of its guns bore directly on the Mexicans in the Mission Square, and did valiant execution until all who manned it had fallen. When the church itself was carried, its defenders, too, fell back inch by inch, fighting till each man was slain. In less than an hour all was over. General Santa Anna, during the fight, had kept to his safe post by the southern battery.

(adapted from: *Battles of the Nineteenth Century* by Forbes, Archibald, et al.)

Henry McArdle, *Dawn at the Alamo*, 1905.
Oil on canvas.
Prints and Photographs Collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin. (pp. 200-201, 202, 203)





Battle of the Smala

(16 May, 1843)

Horace Vernet's picture, or rather panorama, of Smala is about sixty feet in length; and his Battle of Isly, although smaller, also belongs to that class of scene-painting, of which in our country there are no examples. These pictures abound in movement, life, energy, and action; in sixty feet of canvas the eye cannot find a single spot on which to repose: the rude conflict of battle would seem to preclude all the amenities of art. The men are a race of warriors, vigorous and determined; the women display to perfection just those bodily charms which such men prize most highly. The horses and bullocks partake of the same vigour and physical aptitudes; and even still-life lives upon the canvas. The colouring is in-keeping, vigorous, positive, and effective. Now this, if not the highest art, is far from despicable. It is true, we look in vain for sympathy with human suffering; in these pictures the glory of war is the only alleviation for its horrors. We desire, it is true, much that we never find: the thoughts are un-elevated, the forms grossly actual; and, throughout, a physical energy of hand, instead of a thoughtful mind, has been the actuating power. Such art, however, although far from the highest, is perfect of its kind. A picture like the *Battle of Smala* is of great value as an illustrated historical chronicle. No history, written in mere words, could so vividly portray the character of African warfare, the conquest of swarthy and nomadic tribes, the nature of the country which these nomads inhabit, and the appointments of their camp-life, here so ruthlessly desolated.

(adapted from: *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review: Vol. 5*)

Horace Vernet,
The Capture of the Smala of Abd El-Kader (detail),
c. 1843. Oil on canvas, 4.9 x 21.4 m.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.

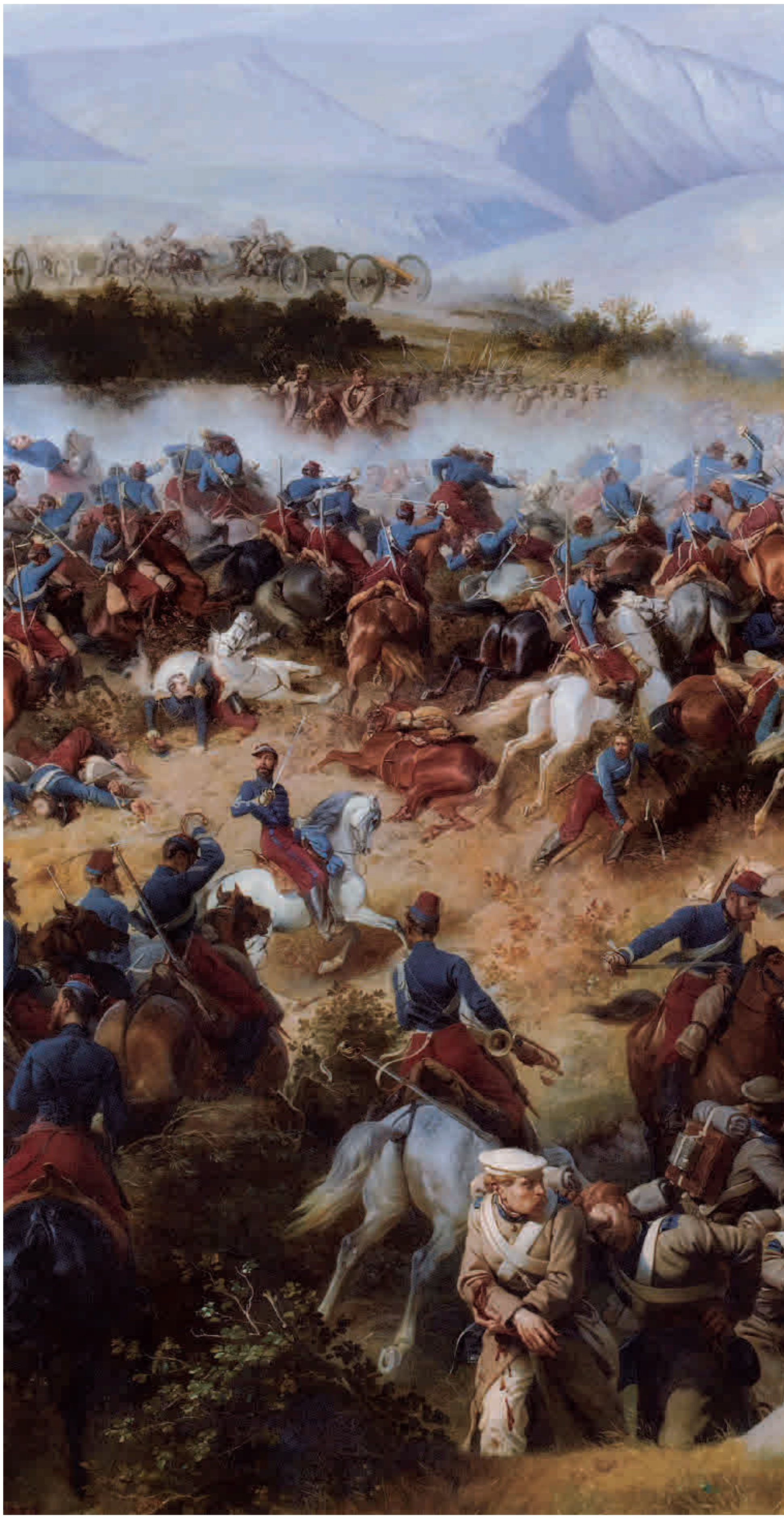
Battle of Montebello

(20 May, 1859)

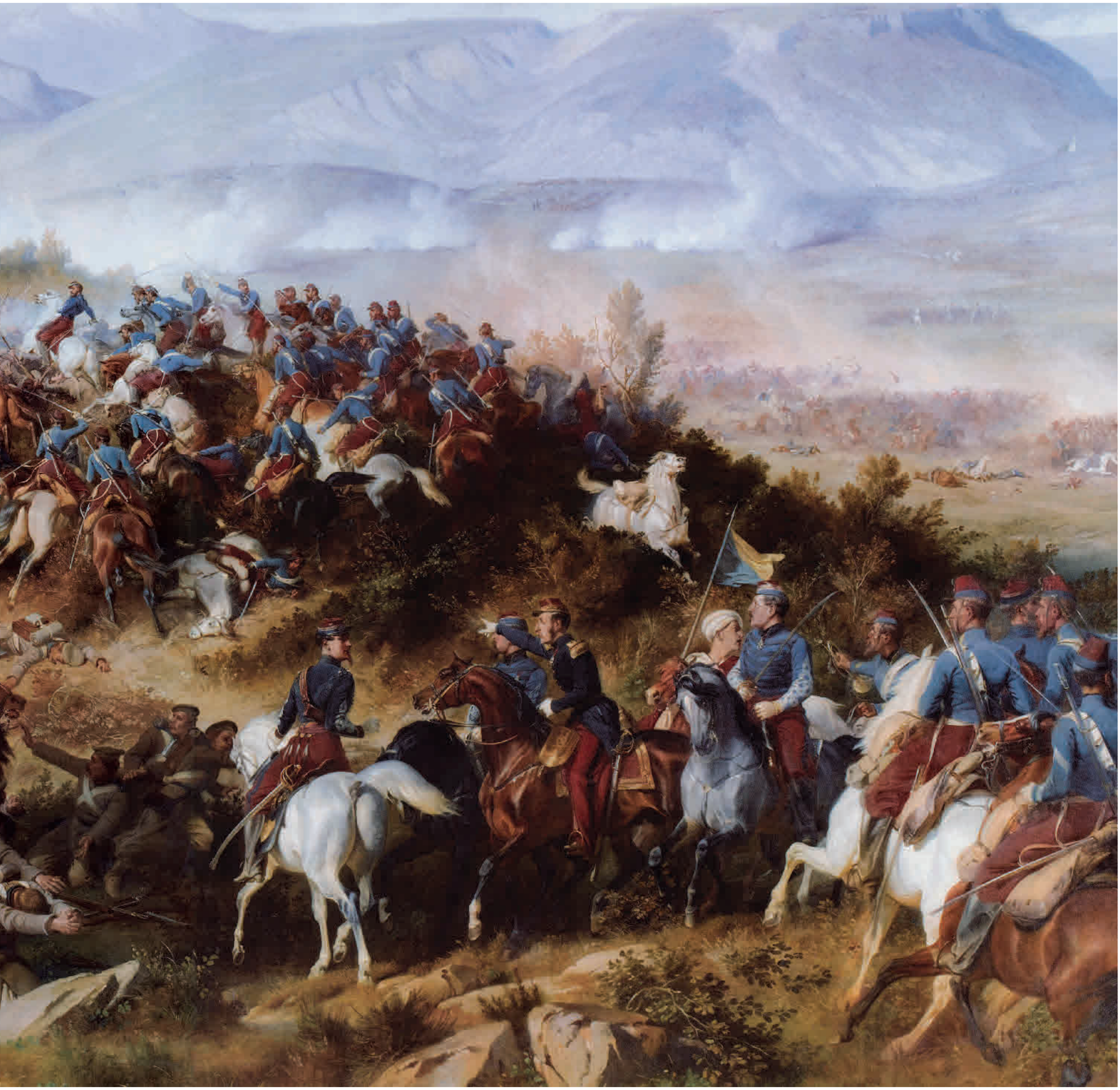
The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals. Hence his ability to pick out the right men and utilise combined energy. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 5, 21)

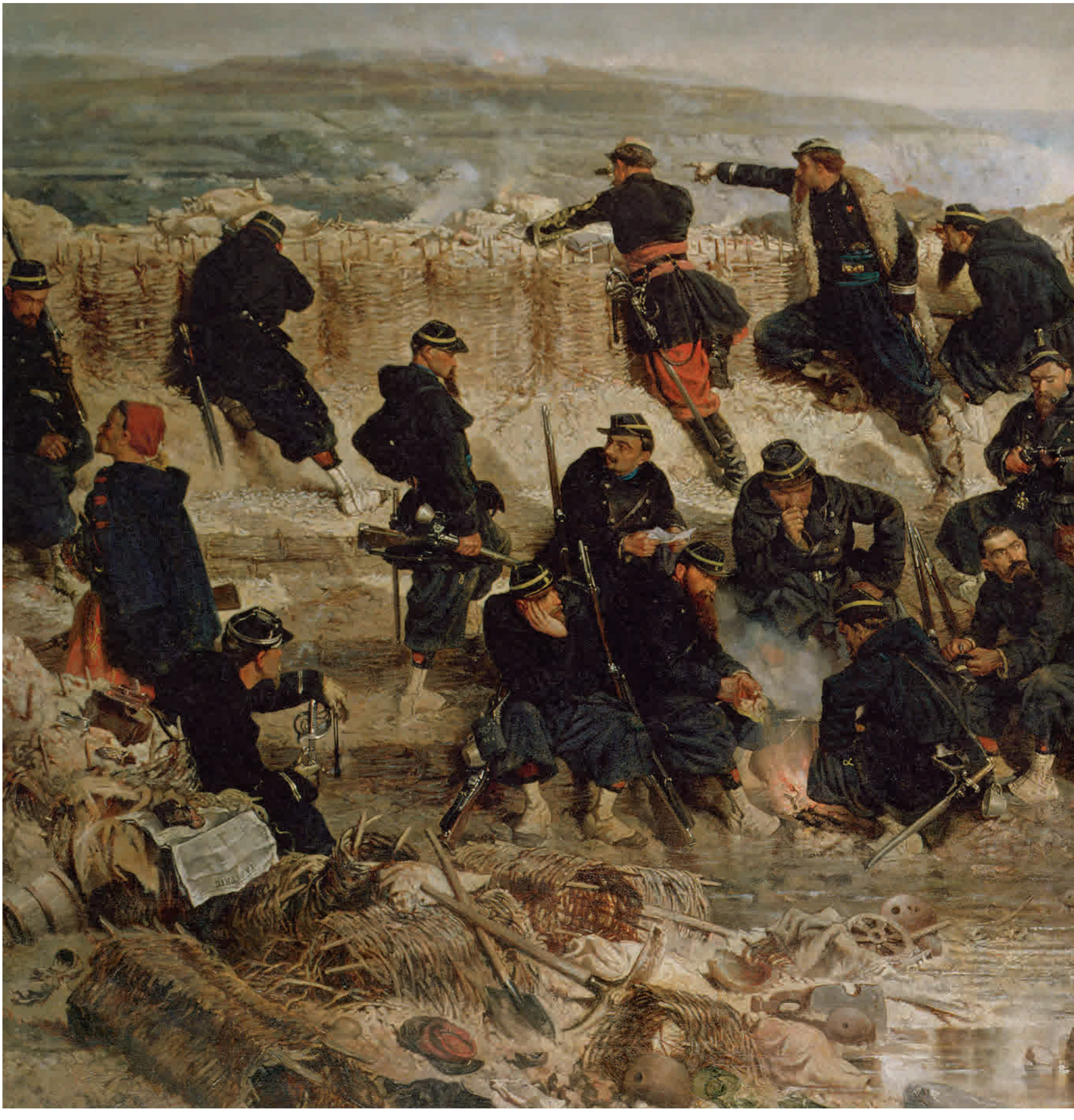
Montebello is located in Lombardy, northern Italy. General Gyulai, the Comander-in-chief of the Austrians, gave orders on 20 May, 1859, for a reconnaissance in force on the right bank of the Po. The Austrian commander had selected for this expedition, under the orders of the commandant of the Fifth Corps, General Urban, who in previous expeditions had already reconnoitred the country and who was then for that purpose with a brigade of the Fifth *corps d'armée* and a brigade of his own division of reserve. General Stadion had given orders that from this position, which had been readied at eleven o'clock, the attack should begin at noon. General Urban was to take possession of Casteggio and Montebello, in order to secure a base for further threatening Voghera, and thus compel the Franco-Sardinian army to display its force. General Gaal, with the reserve, was to follow General Urban. When the Franco-Sardinian army abandoned Montebello, General Urban advanced as far as Genestrello, where he encountered a force his superior in numbers, who made a fierce resistance, but was driven back by the chasseurs of the third and fourth battalions of the Hesse and Don Miguel regiments, which, in spite of considerable losses, soon carried the plateau and farm of Genestrello. But the Franco-Sardinians displayed forces so superior, and continually increased by reinforcements brought up by the railway, that General Urban, as well as Gaal's brigade, which had arrived in the meantime to his support, fighting with heavy loss, but heroically, were forced back on Montebello. Montebello was evacuated after an obstinate resistance.

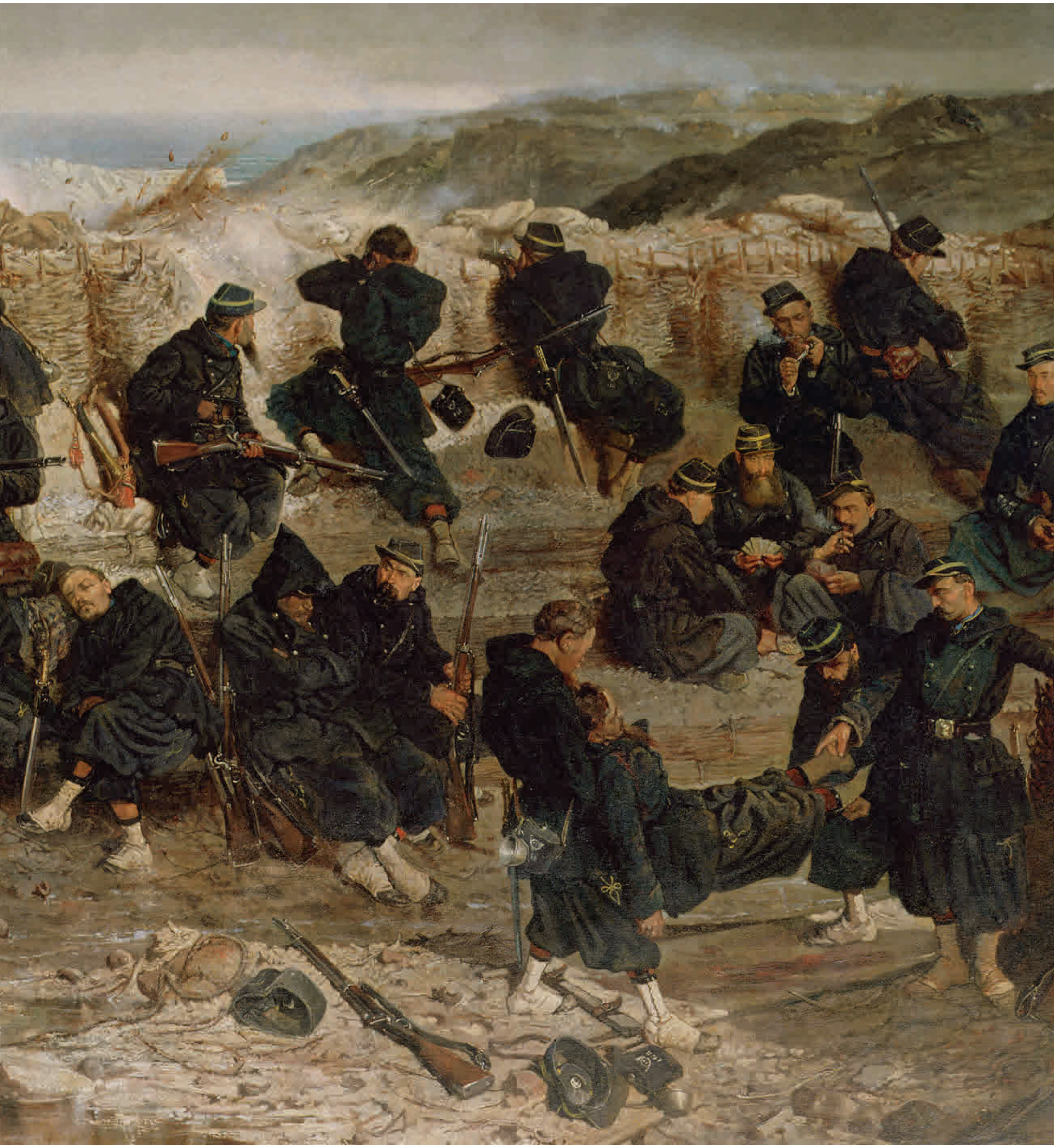
(adapted from: *Illustrated History of the War in Italy* by J.E. Tuel)

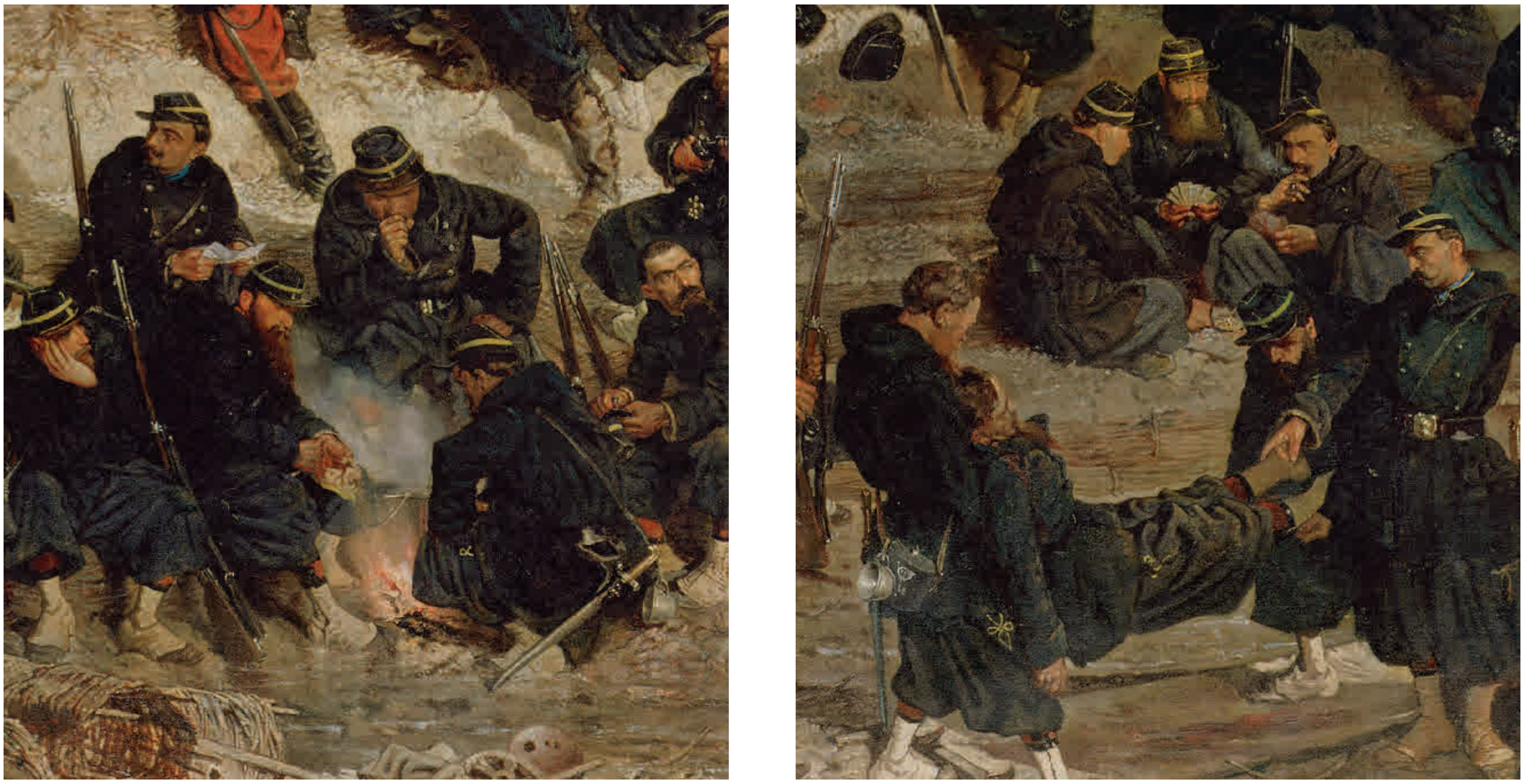


Félix Philippoteaux, *An Episode During the Battle of Balaclava*, 19th century. Oil on canvas, 296 x 446 cm. Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.









Battle of Balaclava

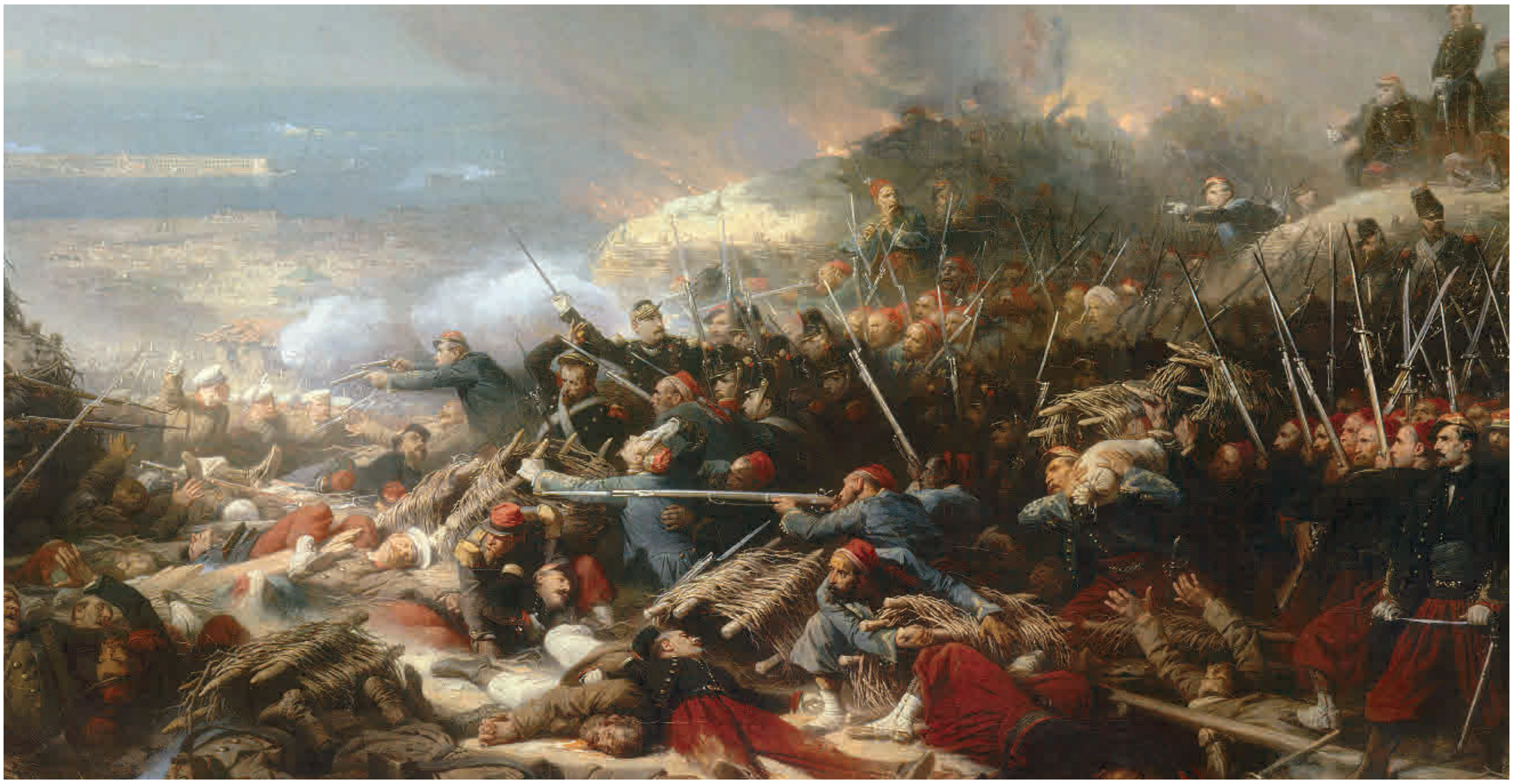
(25 October, 1854)

If you are careful of your men and camp on hard ground, the army will be free from disease of every kind, and this will spell victory. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 9, 12)

On 25 October was fought the Battle of Balaclava, the allied army of 70,000 men, embraced English, French, and Turkish troops. Now, winter approached, with bad weather sickness, increased, and the wants of the soldiers were not duly attended to. Towards the middle of February, the earth works on both sides had been so nearly perfected, that even the bombardment from mortars of great size produced but little apparent effect. The rifle-pits, which are a novelty in siege warfare, next became the objects of constant struggle. Some of the severest fighting of the siege took place for the possession of these pits. On 9 April, the long-expected second bombardment of 530 guns was opened simultaneously by the allies upon the defences of Sevastopol and later the fire slackened on both sides: each seemed glad to avail themselves of a little respite.

The natural consequence, in civilised warfare, of such a contest as that which took place yesterday, is an armistice to bury the dead. It was our sad duty to demand it, for our dead lay outside our lines, and there were no Russian corpses in front of the Redan or Malakoff. During the month of July, the Russians made several severe sorties, but were as often driven back, and the allies made steady progress in their advance toward the doomed city, and the Russian commander informed his government he could not hold the city much longer. The Court of St Petersburg ordered the bold assault to be made on the lines of the Tchernaya,

Alphonse de Neuville, *Siege of Sevastopol*, 1861.
Oil on canvas, 260 x 392 cm.
Musée de l'Armée, Paris. (pp. 208-209, 210)

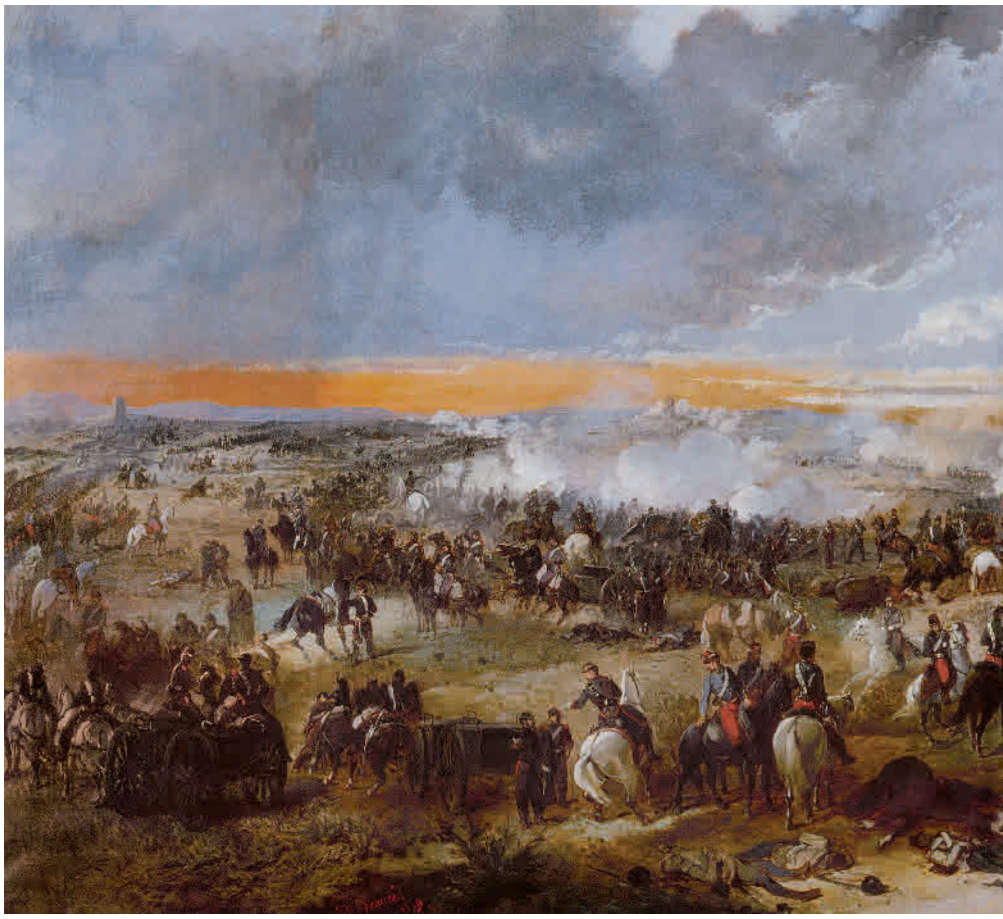


in the hope of compelling the allies to raise the siege, and of regaining Balaclava. The Russians then put forth their energies in one more desperate attack. The attack commenced about five o'clock on 16 August, the fire almost immediately opened along the whole line, but it was soon rendered evident that the chief aim of the Russian commander was to force the passes communicating with the valley of Balaclava, and thus to turn the flank of the French position on the hills. In this battle the allies lost about 1,000 men, killed and wounded.

The next fortnight Prince Gortschakofi devoted himself to provide safety of his army. He had great reason to fear the next bombardment would be fatal; he built a strong raft-bridge across the harbour, threw up earthworks along the cliff to protect it, and drew his army together in compact lines between the sea and the heights of Mackenzie. On 5 September the awful catastrophe was entered upon. The allies opened the fire of their terrible batteries and maintained an incessant cannonade until 8 September, the day fixed upon for the final assault. The drums and the clarions beat and sounded the charge, and to the cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" a thousand times repeated along the whole line, our intrepid soldiers precipitated themselves upon the enemy's defences. It was a solemn moment. They drove back the Russians who continued to resist, and, in a few seconds afterward, the flag of France was finally, planted on the Malakoff. The Allied army lost around 600 men and the Russians 1,000. Both parties sustained heavy losses through disease and exposure.

(adapted from: *The Battle Roll* by E. Perce)

Adolphe Yvon, *Fighting at the Malakoff Gorge*, 19th century.
Oil on canvas, 500 x 750 cm.
Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.



Battle of Solferino

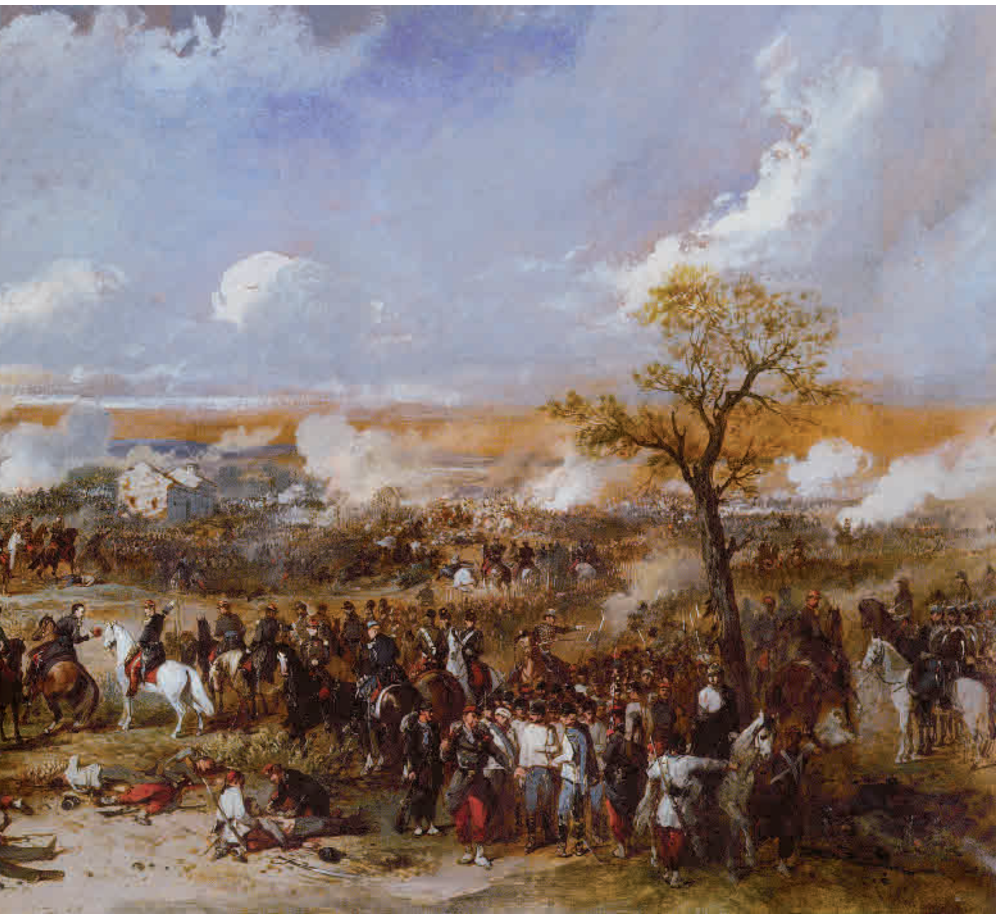
(24 June, 1859)

With regard to precipitous heights, if you are beforehand with your adversary, you should occupy the raised and sunny spots, and there wait for him to come up. If the enemy has occupied them before you, do not follow him, but retreat and try to entice him away. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 10, 10-11)

Europe was once more the scene of a great war in 1859, when Napoleon III, taking up the policy of the First Empire, sent his armies into Northern Italy to drive out the Austrians and substitute French for Austrian influence south of the Alps. Napoleon provoked the quarrel with Austria as soon as he had made some progress with the reorganisation and rearmament of his army, begun after the Russian War. The most important change was the introduction of rifled field artillery.

The French plan was of a more elementary type. Napoleon had had his attention riveted on Solferino. To seize that commanding point in the Austrian centre appeared to him to be the simplest way to victory. The Austrians had carried out more than one series of peace manoeuvres on this very ground, and looked on their hill fortress as impregnable. It says much for the fighting quality of the French that they were able to force it by repeated and costly attacks. The army that fought under Napoleon's command at Solferino was certainly the best that the Second Empire ever possessed.

There was a long struggle for Solferino, and the fate of the hilltop village hung in the balance for hours. The battle for the heights now became a close conflict between great masses of men. The battles of more recent wars were decided by fire, and opposing lines faced each other at long ranges,

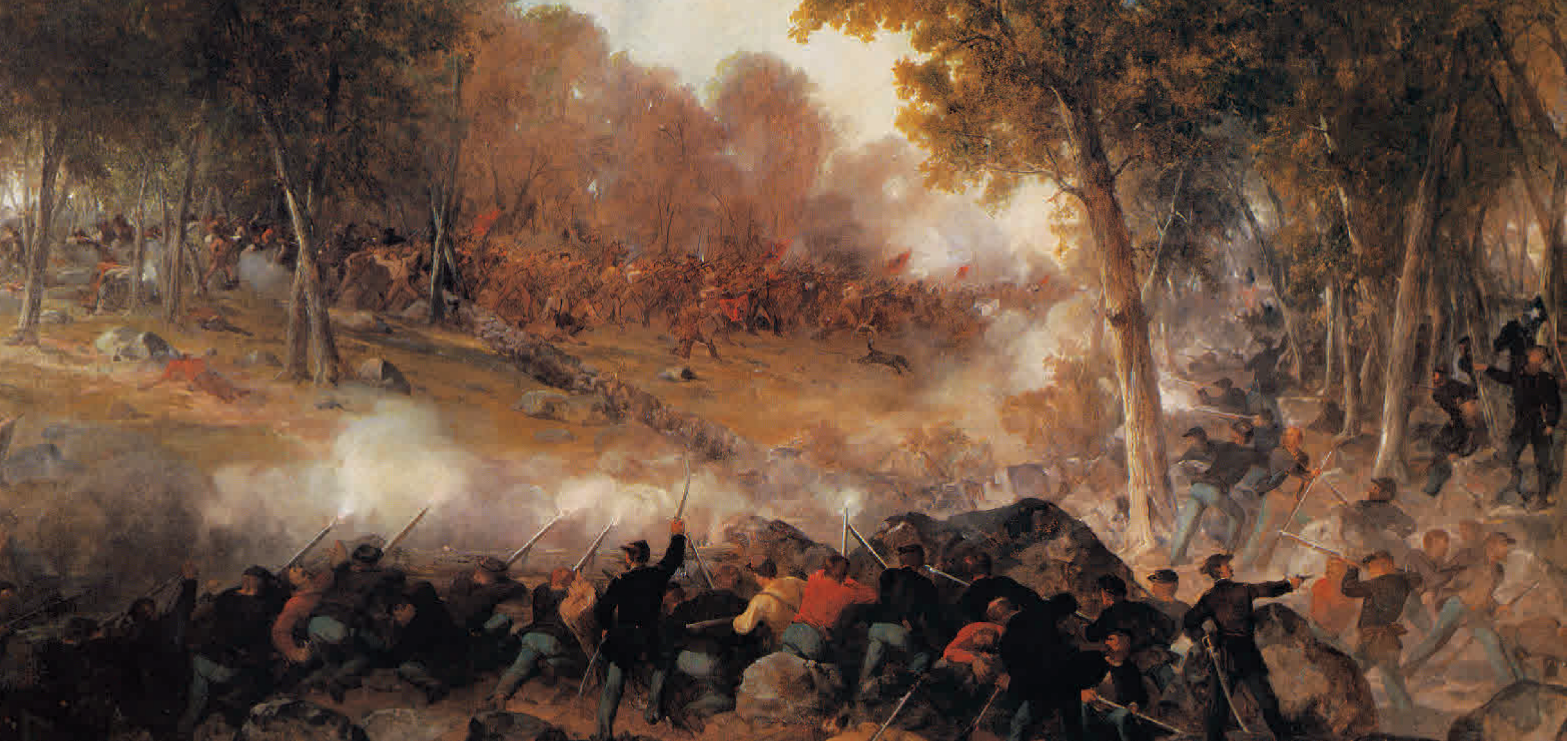


each making such good use of cover that for hours neither saw much of its enemy. But the methods of the Napoleonic wars were still in honour in the days of Solferino. Around the village the defenders were arrayed in deep masses of white-coated infantry, with their batteries in the intervals, and the green-uniformed Tyrolese riflemen held the loopholed houses and farmsteads on the crest. From the foothills to the westward the shells of the French artillery came screaming through the air, bursting with deadly effect over the close-formed ranks, battering the walls of the cemetery, crashing into the roofs of the houses. As each attack was forced back another would be pushed on with fresh troops or the rallied battalions of an earlier onset. Thus it was that twice the cemetery was attacked and twice Bazaine's men were beaten back with loss, only to come on again after the artillery had widened the breaches of the wall. At the third onset the column poured over the barrier like a flood, and swept the defenders before it at the bayonet point. The day was now going badly for Austria. They were actually issuing the orders for a retreat across the Mincio when a startling change came over the scene. Since two o'clock the sky had become more and more overcast; after a few minutes there came on a darkness like night, and a tremendous thunderstorm burst over the battlefield.

When the storm ceased, as suddenly as it had begun, it was seen that all along the centre, in the hills, and on the left in the plain the Austrians had abandoned their positions. Within a few days of the Battle of Solferino the armistice of Villafranca prepared the way for peace between France and Austria. It was the last great triumph of the Second Empire.

(adapted from: *Famous Modern Battles* by A. Hilliard Atteridge)

Jean-Adolphe Beaucé, *General Niel at the Battle of Solferino*, 1859.
Paper mounted on canvas, 86 x 170 cm.
Musée national du château de Compiègne, Compiègne.



Battle of Gettysburg

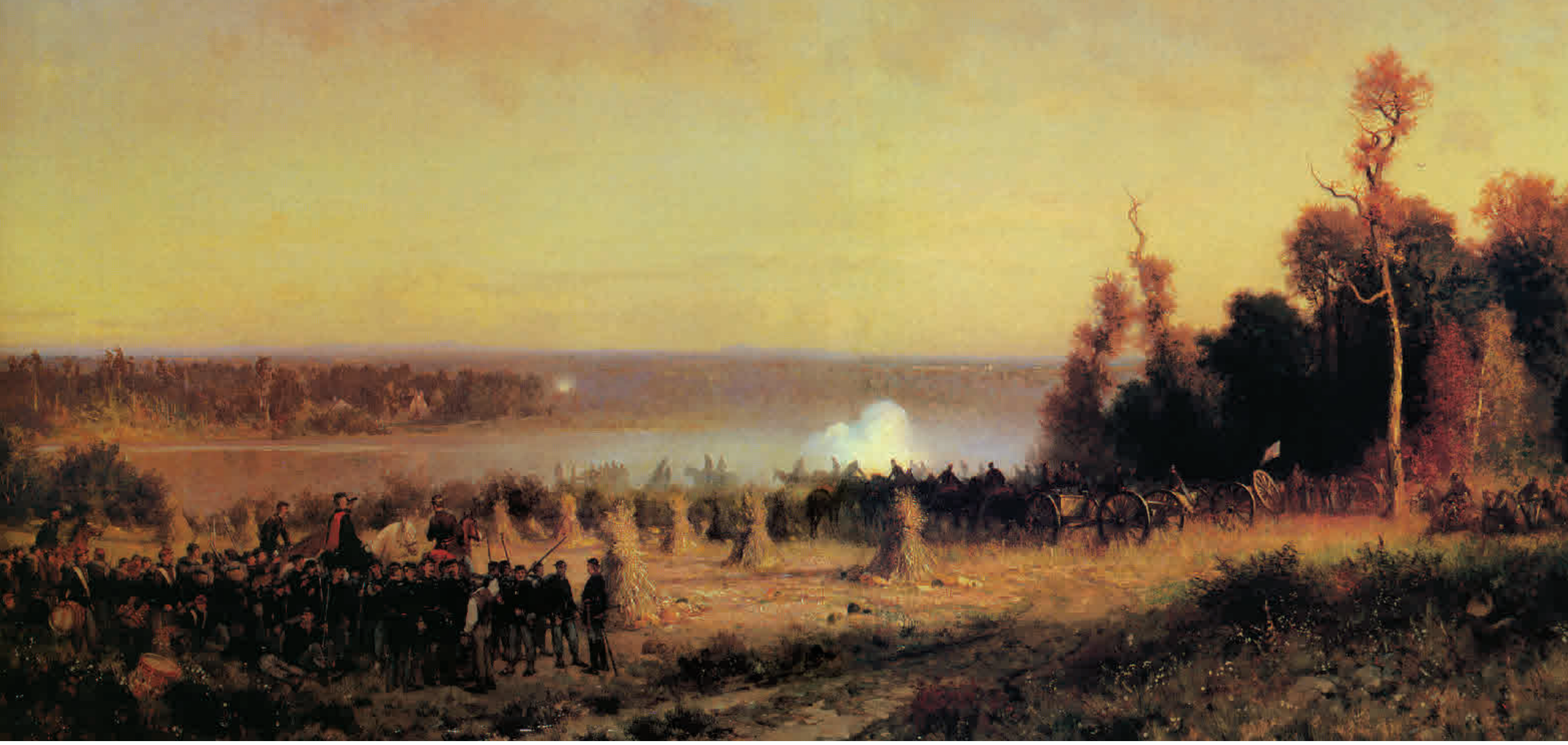
(1-3 July, 1863)

A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. (Abraham Lincoln, 16 June, 1858)

The Battle of Gettysburg is conceded to be the turning point in the American Civil War. Gettysburg is a small town in southeastern Pennsylvania and in 1863 contained about 1,500 inhabitants.

The fighting on that day was confined chiefly to the two extremes, leaving the centre inactive. Longstreet commanded the Confederate right and the Union left was commanded by General Daniel E. Sickles, whose division lay directly opposite that of Longstreet. General Lee gave orders to Longstreet to make a general attack. The Union forces answered quickly with their batteries and the fight extended from the peach orchard along the whole line to the base of Little Round Top. The most desperate struggle of the second day was to get possession of Little Round Top, which was the key to the whole battleground west and south of Cemetery Ridge. General Longstreet sent General Hood with his division to occupy it. The Federals, under General Warren, defended this position and were charged on by General Hood's division with fixed bayonets time after time, but the Confederates were pressed down the hillside at the point of the bayonet, and thus was Little Round Top saved to the Union army. During this attack, and for some time thereafter, the battle continued in the valley below, where many thousands were engaged. The Confederates had gained an apparent advantage on Culp's Hill, but the Union lines, except as to this point, were unbroken. On the night of 2 July, Lee held council of war with his generals and decided to make a grand assault on Meade's centre the following day.

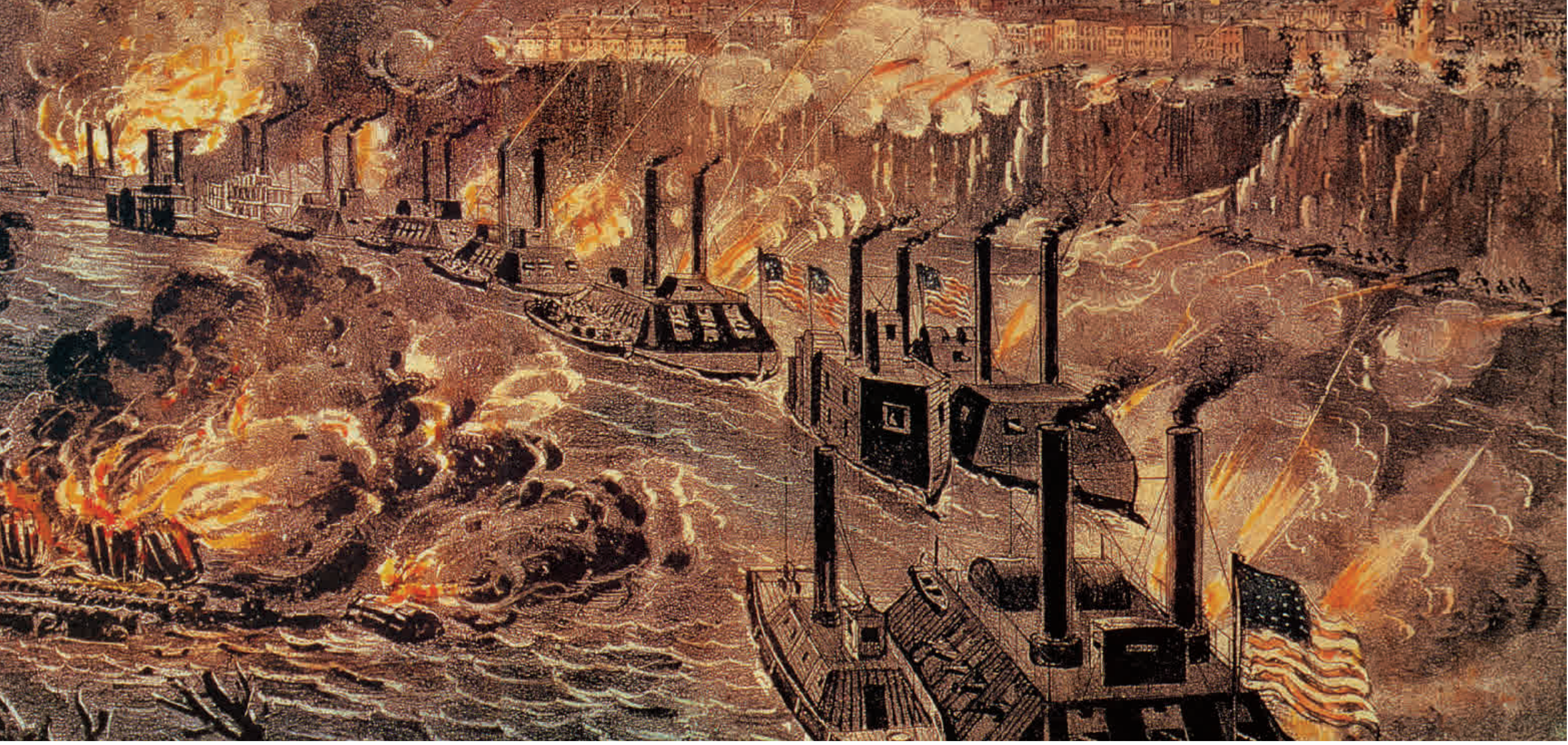
Peter Frederick Rothermel, *Attack on Culp's Hill, Gettysburg, July 3rd, 1863*, 1870.
Oil on canvas.
Collections of the State Museum of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania.



The coming of morning revealed the two parallel lines of cannon which signified too well the story of what the day would bring forth. About 3 o'clock in the morning on 2 July, the division began to move towards Gettysburg and marched as rapidly as circumstances would permit, as the roads were blocked with wagons, artillery, and the wounded of both armies. On the following day General Lee had amassed in front of the division about 120 pieces of artillery, and they were to open on Cemetery Heights and endeavour if possible to dislodge the enemy. This cannonading began about noon, and was answered by the enemy with a hundred pieces. A more terrific fire has never been witnessed by man than occurred there on that July afternoon. The Federals seem to have exhausted their ammunition in some places in the artillery lines. This being discovered by Pickett, gave him courage, and he caused his division to move up quickly. Crossing several fields enclosed by strong fences, he at length reached the base of the elevation. The division pressed on. The Confederate ranks were thinning as far as eye could see. Pickett, seeing the hopelessness of the charge, ordered a retreat of his shattered lines. Out of 4,800 men that followed Pickett, scarcely 1,200 to 1,300 got back into the Confederate lines. At that time of the battle, after 3 days, the loss was about 50,000 men, which was about equally divided between the two armies. Nevertheless, the Confederate Army had 20,000 fewer men from the beginning, and thus General Lee was more affected by the battle. He decided to lead his army back to Virginia. The Confederates were much discouraged, for on this same day Vicksburg had been surrendered to General Grant. The Battle of Gettysburg was now over.

(adapted from: *Battles of the Civil War* by T.E. Vineyard)

Alfred Wordsworth Thompson, *Artillery on the Potomac,* c. 1868-1870.
Oil on canvas, 84.3 x 179.2 cm.
The White House Historical Association (White House Collection), Washington, D.C.



Siege of Vicksburg

(18 May – 4 July, 1863)

On the other hand, the proximity of an army causes prices to go up; and high prices cause the people's substance to be drained away. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 2, 11)

At Vicksburg about 100,000 men and a powerful fleet of many gunboats and ironclads fought for forty days and nights to decide whether the Confederate states should be cut in two. The object of the Federal army was to gain control of the entire course of the river and to separate the Confederate states so as to hinder them from getting supplies and men for their armies from the southwest. The great problem of the Federals was how to get control of Vicksburg. This great question was left to General Grant to work out.

In the last days of June the combined fleet, under Farragut and Porter, arrived below the Confederate stronghold. On the night of 16 April, Porter ran past the batteries of Vicksburg with his fleet after days of preparation. By 3 o'clock in the morning the fleet was below the city and ready to cooperate with Grant's army. The Federal army now invested the city, occupying the surrounding hills. The city was filled with soldiers and the citizens of the country who had fled there for refuge and were now penned in. The army now settled down to the wearisome siege, and for six weeks they encircled the city with trenches, approaching nearer and nearer to the defending walls. One by one the defending batteries were silenced. The supply of food became scarcer day by day, and by the end of June the entire city was in a complete famine. At ten o'clock on the morning of 3 July the firing ceased and a strange quietness rested over all. Pemberton had opened negotiations with Grant for the capitulation of the city.

(adapted from: *Battles of the Civil War* by T.E. Vineyard)

Currier & Ives (printer), *Ironclad Attack on Vicksburg*, 1863.
Chromolitograph.
U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.

Battle of Atlanta

(22 July, 1864)

The expediency of aggressive or defensive tactics; and the fundamental laws of human nature: these are things that must most certainly be studied. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 11, 41)

Joseph E. Johnston was in command of the Confederate army in the West. After a halt at Adairsville, fully decided to give battle to Sherman, Johnston suddenly changed his mind and withdrew his army to Cassville; then to a stronger position at Kenesaw Mountain, on the advice of his generals. On account of these several retreats, gave rise to a cause of a great deal of dissent among his soldiers. General Johnston was then removed from command of the army, handed to fearless and aggressive General Hood.

On 20 July, Hood offered battle which was a decided loss to the Confederates, driven back on every hand, but not without hard fighting and much loss to the Federals. Two days later, the Battle of Atlanta was fought, this being the greatest engagement of the entire campaign. The Federals had closed in upon Atlanta, but on 22 July was a general engagement of all the army, the attack being made by Hood to recapture some of his lost positions. The Confederates achieved considerable success, but the Federals were presently reinforced, and Hood withdrew within the defenses of Atlanta. Again, on 28 July, the Federals were attacked by General Hardee and a fierce battle was fought at Ezra Church, in which the Confederates were defeated with heavy loss. Hood determined to attack the Federals and sent General Hardee to make an attack near Jonesboro, while he himself should attack Sherman's right flank. These attacks failed, thus necessitating the evacuation of Atlanta, which he did on 2 September, after destroying all the supplies he could not take with him.

(adapted from: *Battles of the Civil War* by T.E. Vineyard)

Confederate lines near Atlanta.
Photograph, 1864.
Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

Battle of Sadowa (Battle of Königgrätz)

(3 July, 1866)

By method and discipline are to be understood the marshalling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduations of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 1, 10)

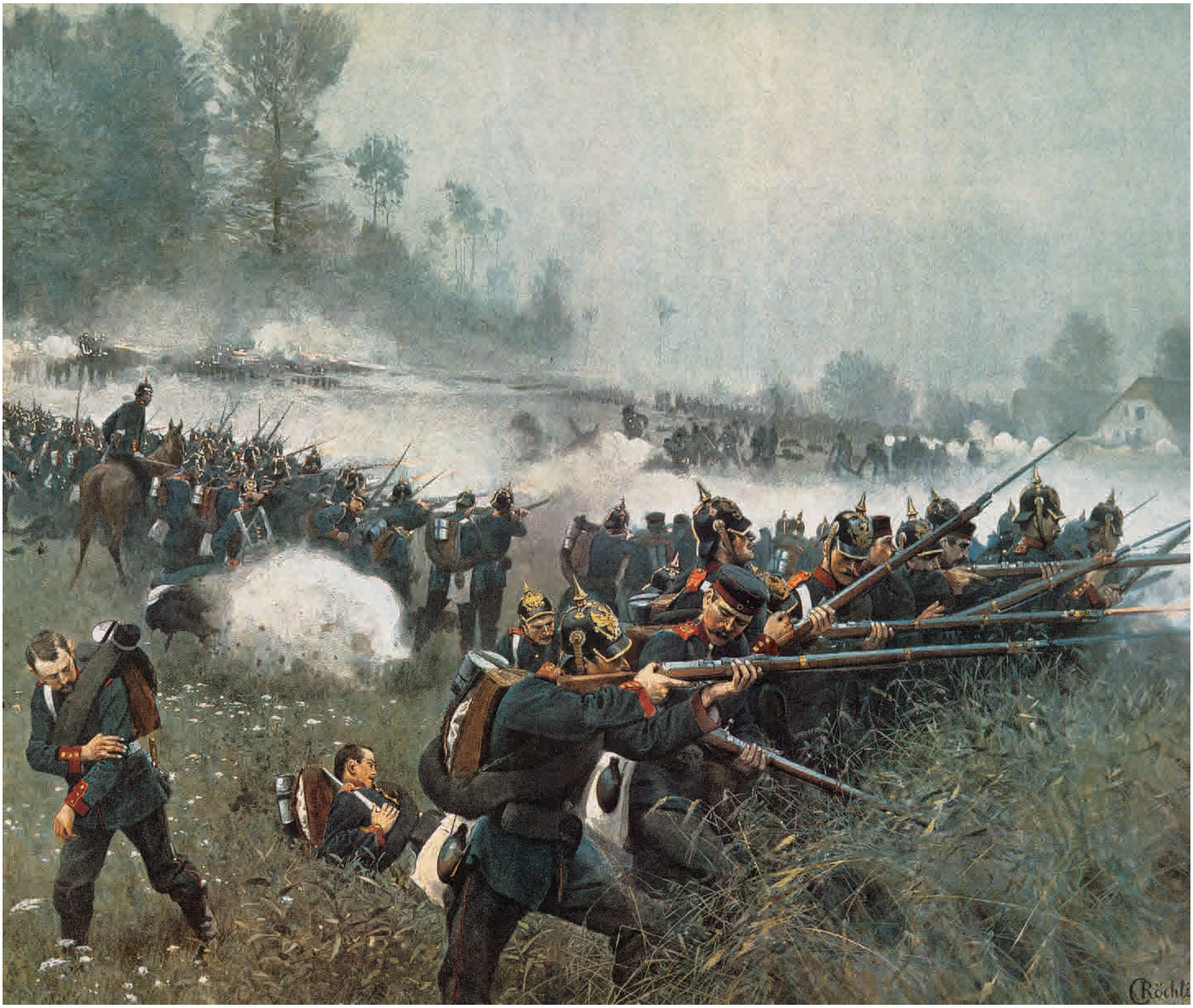
Germany was a confederation of more than fifty states – kingdoms, grand-duchies, duchies, principalities, free cities – with Austria and Prussia as permanent rivals for the control of the Federal Diet. Prussia counted among the second-rate military powers, and no one in the early sixties foresaw the great changes that would soon make the Prussian king the most formidable rival of the French emperor.

The quarrel came to a head in the early summer of 1866. Most of the minor states of Germany ranged themselves on the side of Austria at the outbreak of the war, and the general impression was that Bismarck and King William were risking a disaster for Prussia that might prove as fatal as that of Jena. The war lasted only seven weeks. It was a surprise and a revelation to all Europe. Its lessons led to radical changes in the war methods and the peace organisation of every army on the Continent. Sadowa, the crowning victory of the Prussian arms, was an epoch-making battle.

After Jena, Napoleon had tried to cripple the military power of Prussia by embodying in the treaty of peace a clause limiting the Prussian army to 42,000 men. Hitherto, long service had been the rule of European armies. But Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, who reorganised the Prussian army after Jena, adopted a system of short service in order to pass as many men as possible through the ranks, and form a reserve of trained soldiers. This system of using the peace army as a training school for a huge reserve, and expanding it into a large war army on the approach of hostilities, became the basis of the Prussian military organisation. To this was added the plan of permanently localising every regiment, brigade, division, and army corps, so that the men of a town, village, or district fought side by side in war, under the leaders who had trained them in peace. This system of a small standing army and a large reserve was economical. It enabled a comparatively poor state like Prussia to provide an excellent armament and equipment for a large war army. The infantry was armed with a breech-loading rifle in 1855, before any other government had ventured on such a change. But most important of all was the work of the general staff, organised and trained by Von Moltke. Its business was not only to collect intelligence and prepare plans of operations well in advance of any possible conflict, but also to direct the training of the troops and their leaders, and to inspire the whole army with a common ideal as to the methods to be followed in war. Individual initiative was encouraged. Generals were taught that they must take the responsibility of acting for themselves without waiting for detailed orders, and the orders issued by Von Moltke in war were always of the briefest. It was left to each in his own sphere to work out the details. The tactical methods taught to the troops were eminently practical. The infantry fought on a system that united some of the advantages of line and column. The war of 1866 was the first trial of the reorganised Prussian army in a really important campaign.

(adapted from: *Famous Modern Battles* by A. Hilliard Atteridge)

Carl Röchling, *Battle of Königgratz, 1866*, 1894.
Watercolour.



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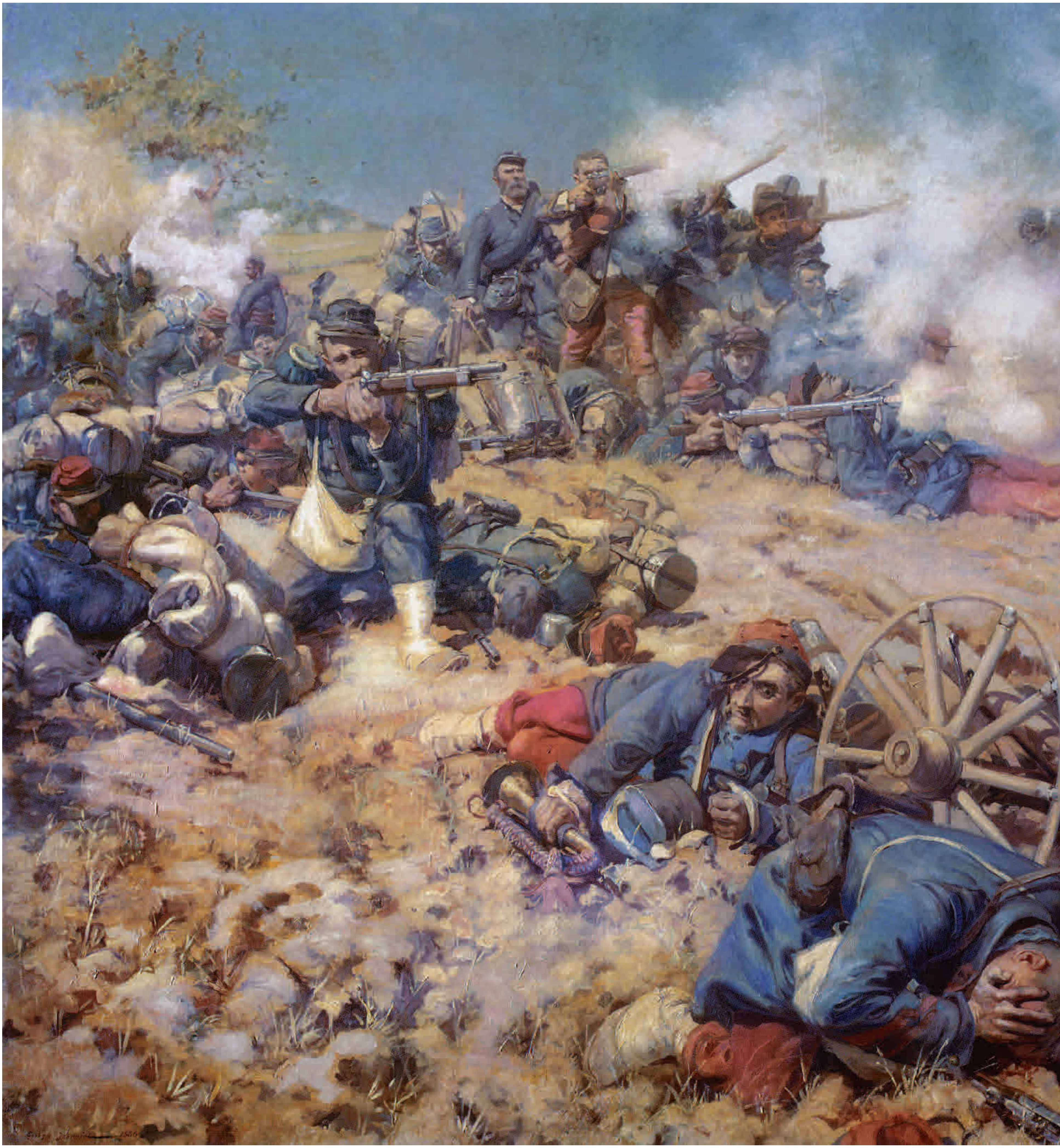
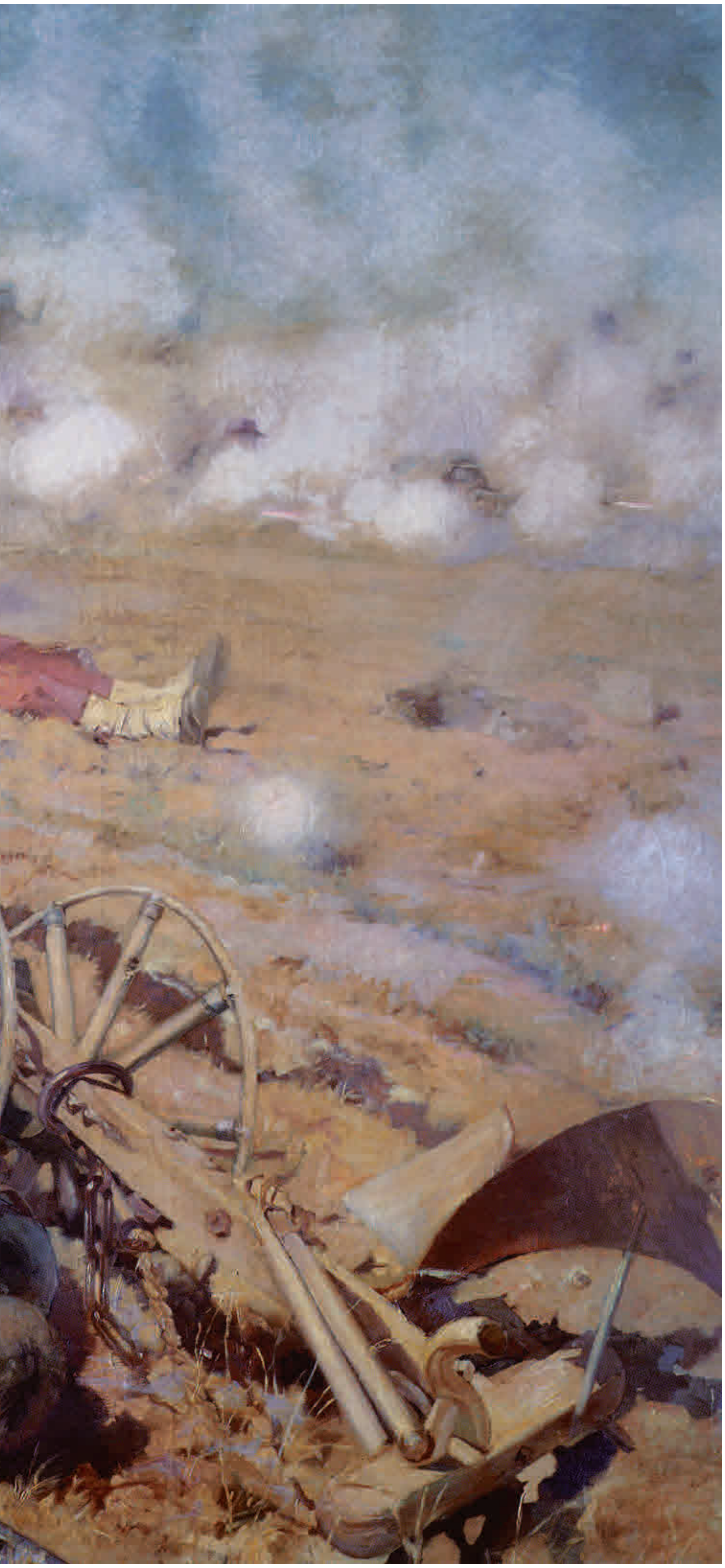




Battle of Gravelotte

(18 August, 1870)

What the ancients called a clever fighter is one who not only wins, but excels in winning with ease. He wins his battles by making no mistakes. Making no mistakes is what establishes the certainty of victory, for it means conquering an enemy that is already defeated. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 4, 11/13)

Paris had gone half mad with the war fever. Marshal Leboeuf had assured the emperor that his army was "ready down to the last gaiter button." Those Prussians had scored in 1866 because they had a breech-loading rifle against slow-firing, old-fashioned muzzle-loaders. But now the French had the wonderful chassepot, with a longer range than the Prussian needle gun. So France was up to date, in the weapons of its army, and, better still, it was an army of veterans, of professional soldiers, the victors of the Crimea, Italy, Algeria. Compared with them the short-service soldiers of Prussia, with their crowds of reservists hurried up from desk and counter, were only a militia.

German leadership in the Franco-Prussian war was by no means perfect. It seemed to be so admirable, because on the whole it was good, and because that of the generals of the French army was abominably bad, except sometimes on the actual battlefield, where their soldier courage and the quality of their men enabled them to make a good fight. But even there, an unfortunate theory of the best tactics for the quick-firing breech-loading rifle handicapped them throughout. The sound theory of Napoleon's days, which held its own still in the campaign of Magenta and Solferino, was that attack is the best form of defence, and the impetuous character of the French makes their attack formidable. But with the coming of the breech-loading rifle there had come also a new doctrine that the way to win battles was to "sit tight" on a good position,

Pierre-Georges Jeanniot, *The Firing Line, an Episode at the Battle of Rezonville, 16th August 1870*, 1886.
Oil on canvas, 300 x 200 cm.
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Pau.

preferably a line of high ground, and use the rapid fire to destroy the enemy as he attacked. "The defensive is now superior," was the teaching of the French military schools. The Germans held by the sounder doctrine, "Only the attack can give real results. It may be more costly than formerly, but the cost must be paid. To attack is to assert from the outset the sense of power and the determination to win."

For hours on this day of Rezonville, the French had in their hands the opportunity of gaining a great victory – if only they would attack. But this wretched theory of the superiority of the defence made it the ruling idea that all they had to do was to cling to the edge of the high ground near the Mars-la-Tour-Gravelotte road and repel the Prussian attack. Regimental officers, even soldiers in the French ranks, felt this instinctively; but Bazaine and the staff let the golden opportunity go by, and the rashness and the error of judgement of the German leaders thus became in the popular mind enterprise and clear-sighted daring. It is a true saying that he wins in war who makes the fewest mistakes – for mistakes there always are. The Germans fully expected a fierce counter-attack on their left, and massed all their available cavalry to protect the exposed flank. The French cavalry leaders, more enterprising than their colleagues, saw the chance, and moved brigade after brigade to the right, and then boldly attacked the German cavalry. There was the most serious cavalry fighting of the whole war on the open ground near Mars-la-Tour. On both sides, regiment after regiment was thrown into the melee, till at last some 80 squadrons – more than 5,000 men – were engaged.

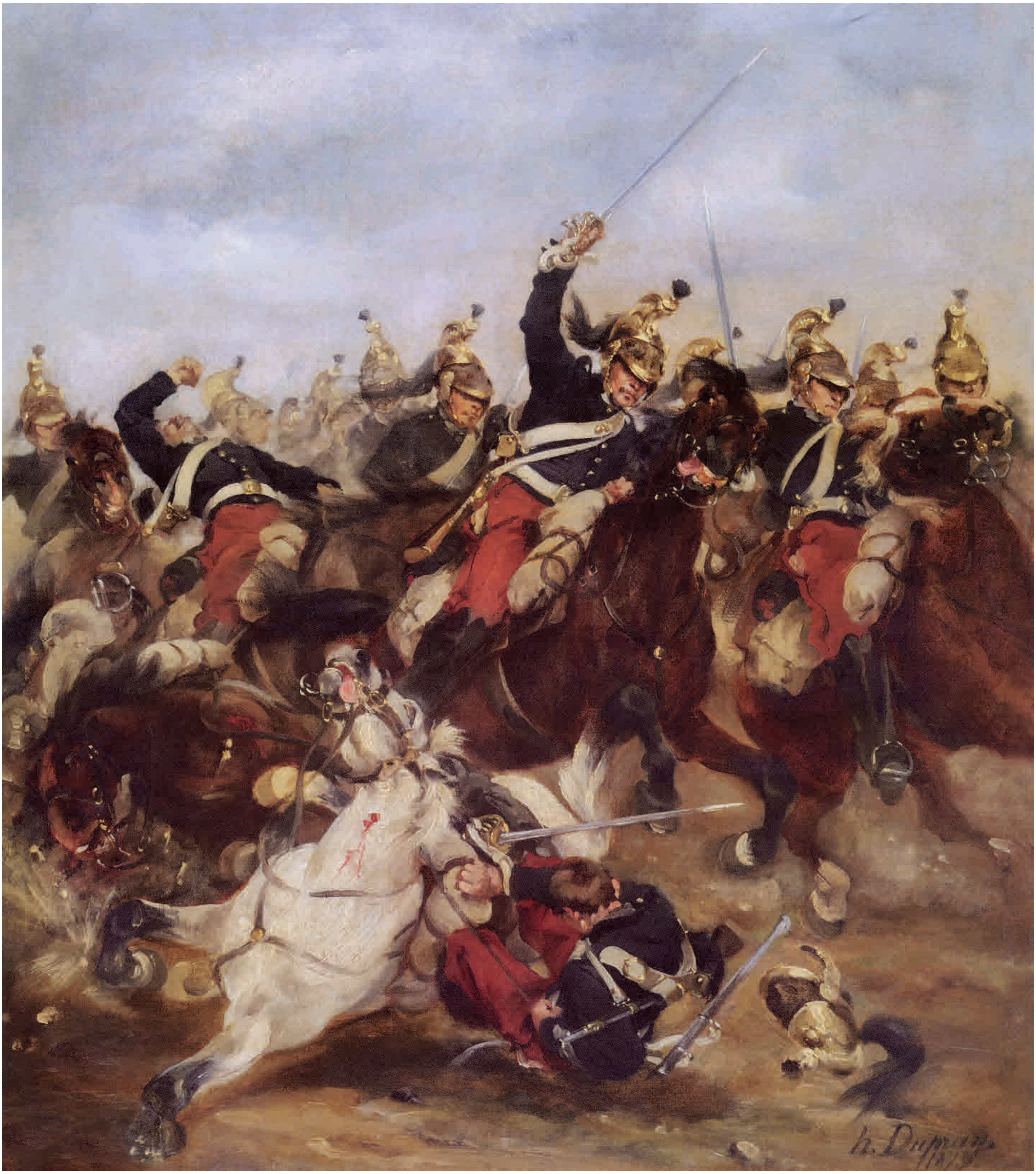
Before morning the whole French army was retiring to the protection of the forts of Metz. Rezonville had stopped Bazaine's retreat; the victory of Gravelotte drove the feeble French generalissimo back to the entrenched camp, where he waited in almost unbroken inactivity till famine and fever ruined his army, and after ten weeks the capitulation of 2 October handed over to the conquerors a great fortress. The three days of August 16, 17, and 18 were the critical days of the war. Gravelotte was its decisive victory.

The battlefield in front of and around St Privat and Amanvilliers, the scene of the fiercest fighting and most fearful loss in this war, still bears a visible record of the strife. One realises the awful cost of war as one visits this group of famous battlefields, and then one must reflect that, besides the young lives cut short by shell and bullet and blade, there were the crowded hospitals, and the desolation carried to tens of thousands of French and German homes, as women and children heard the news of the fate of husband, father, brother, and son. This is the dark shadow cast far and wide by the glory of the battlefield.

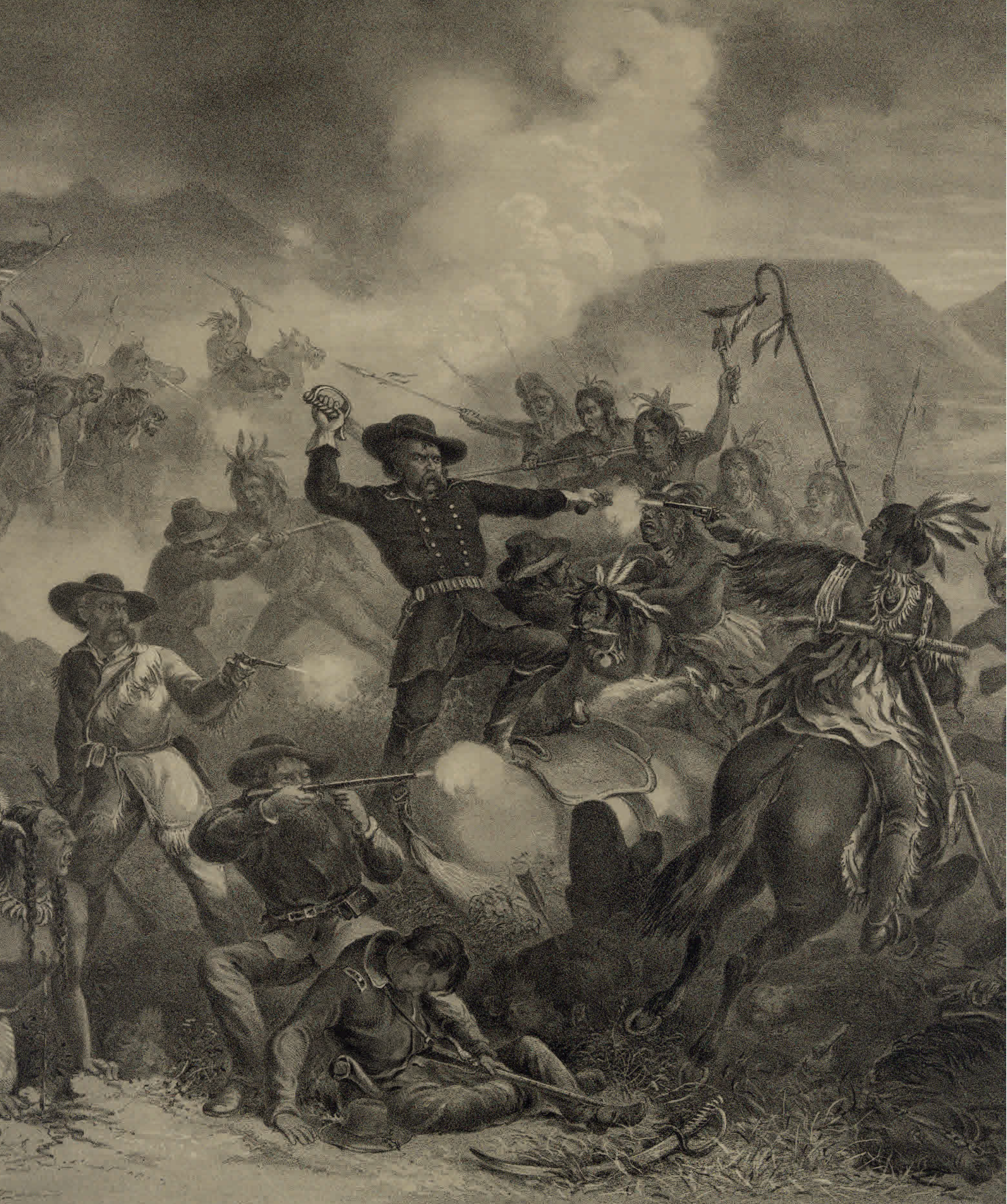
The August battles around Metz are variously named by French and German writers. The Battle of the Sixteenth is variously known as the Battle of Rezonville, Mars-la-Tour, or Vionville, and in some French histories of the war it is called the Battle of Gravelotte.

(adapted from: *Famous Modern Battles* by A. Hilliard Atteridge)

Henry-Louis Dupray, *Charge of the 'Bachelier'-Brigade against the 4th Brigade of the Prussian Cavalry at the Battle of Rezonville, 16th August 1870*, 1873.
Oil on canvas, 40.5 x 32.5 cm.
Musée de l'Armée, Paris.



h. Dupray



Battle of Little Big Horn

(25-26 June, 1876)

To begin by bluster, but afterwards to take fright at the enemy's numbers, shows a supreme lack of intelligence. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 9, 37)

On the morning of 25 June, General Custer, in a personal reconnoitre, discovered the foe of which he was in search. Although he found himself unable to locate the actual village, he saw great herds of ponies, saw the smoke curling up in the air of morning, and heard the barking of the dogs, denoting the presence of a village behind a hill that lay in front of him. It had been Custer's intention to remain quietly where his command rested until night fell, but this plan miscarried; word reached the leader that a Sioux Indian had discovered the presence of the United States troops and had galloped off to warn his tribe. Custer resolved to attack at once. Custer's battalion took to the right to cross the hills and ride down upon the encampment, and Major Reno branched off to the left and forded the Little Big Horn – a stream that gives the battle its name – at the mouth of a stream now called Benteen's Creek.

When Custer reached the top of the hill, instead of a village of some 800 or 1,000 warriors, he saw beneath him a veritable city of wigwams spread out in the valley. The smoke from the fires clouded the sky, great herds of ponies cropped the grass as far as the eye could see, thousands of painted Sioux, armed, and astride their shaggy ponies, galloped in circles, working themselves into a frenzy of fury to fight the White man. Medicine men danced and yelled their incantations, and squaws busily struck the tents and hurried their papooses and swarms of dusky children out of harm's way. When this scene of angry life met his gaze, General Custer, old Indian fighter that he was, must have recognised that he was in for what seemed likely to be his last fight. But the mistake had been made. The time had passed for new plans of battle. He could not turn his back on the warriors to join his battalion with the others, for already the painted bucks were circling round him and firing into his ranks. Hemmed in, retreat out of the question, and trusting that his other battalions would hurry to his support, he called to his men, and together they plunged into the shrieking, shouting, seething mass of painted and befeathered Red men – and died.

After separation the only word received from Custer was an order signed by the adjutant, and addressed to Captain Benteen, which read: "Benteen, come on. Big village. Be quick. Bring Packs;" and a postscript, "Bring Packs." About the time this message must have been dispatched, those with Reno beheld the general and his men on top of a hill two miles or more away, looking down upon the village, and saw Custer take off his hat and wave it in the air, as if either beckoning the other battalions to his assistance or cheering his men.

The battalion disappeared over the brow of the hill, and after that no word or sign ever came from Custer or anyone of his whole command. Not a man of the hundreds that followed the general in the charge lived to tell the tale. The battalion was simply wiped out of existence. The great armies which, immediately the news of Custer's massacre reached Washington, were sent to trap the Indians, marched up and down the Badlands; but were never able to find an Indian to fight.

(adapted from: *Battles of the Nineteenth Century* by Forbes, Archibald, et al.)

Henry Steinegger, *General Custer's Death Struggle.*
The Battle of the Little Big Horn (detail), c. 1878.
Lithograph on paper, 50 x 67.5 cm.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

Battle of Omdurman

(2 September, 1898)

Though the enemy be stronger in numbers, we may prevent him from fighting. Scheme so as to discover his plans and the likelihood of their success. Rouse him, and learn the principle of his activity or inactivity. Force him to reveal himself, so as to find out his vulnerable spots. (Sun Tzu, Ch. 6, 22-23)

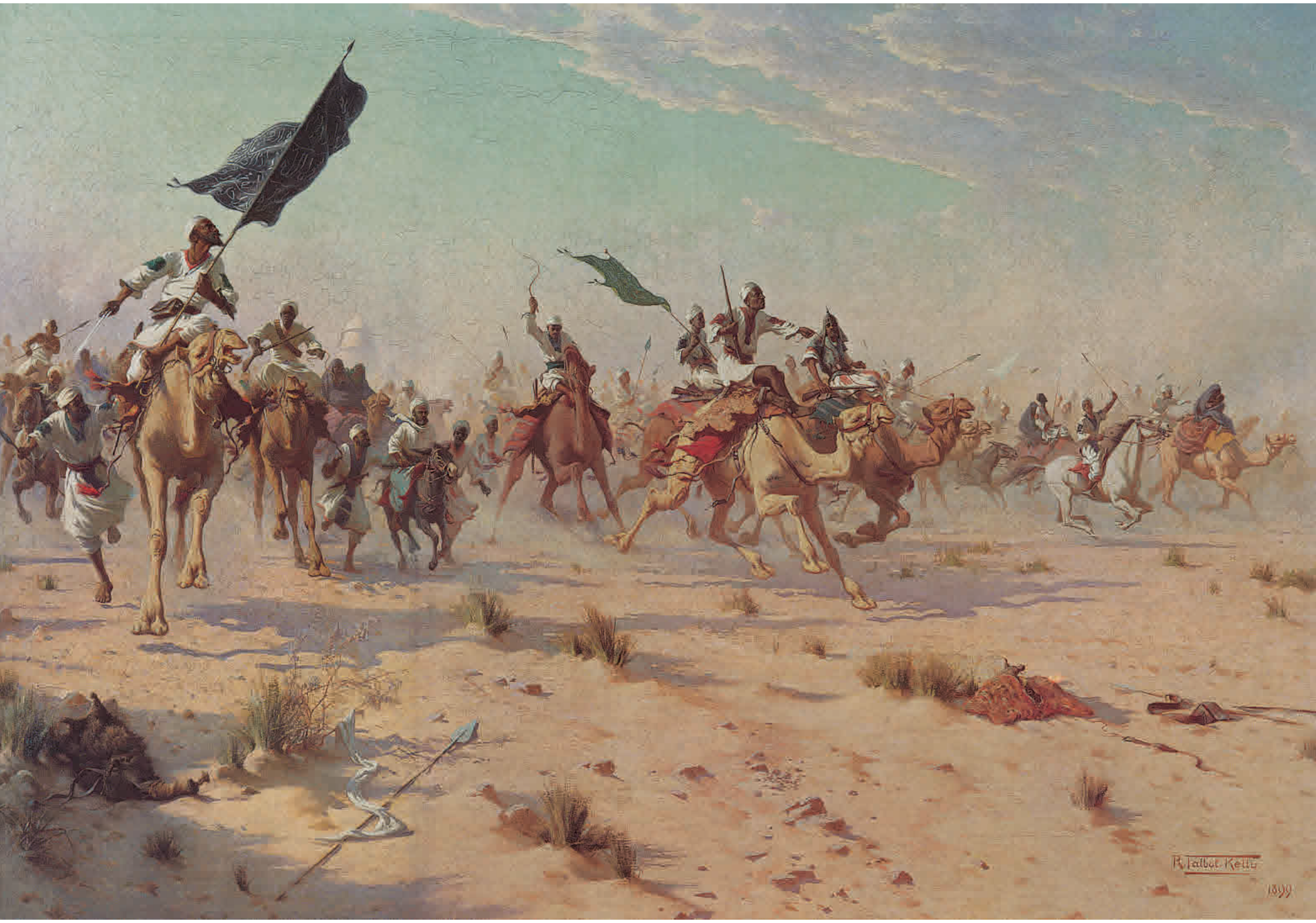
So in the days when Egypt and the Sudan were falling into a chaos of misgovernment under the rule of the Khedive Ismail and his lieutenants, and the oppression of the tribes on the upper Nile had made them ready for rebellion, Mohammed Ahmed, an Arab of the Dongola province and a religious teacher, declared that he was the Mahdi, or redeemer of Islam. When he came into conflict with the government, his successes seemed to the Sudanese almost miraculous and a proof of his claim. In the summer of 1881, with a crowd armed with sticks and a few spears, he surprised and disarmed the troops sent against him. Other victories followed. The Mahdi overran whole provinces. An expedition sent against him under General Hicks, a British officer in the Egyptian service, was destroyed almost to a man. Khartoum was besieged. A British expedition under Wolseley toiled up the Nile and fought its way across the desert, only to arrive too late. Khartoum had been stormed and Gordon killed on 2 January, 1885, during the last stage of the desert campaign. It was then decided to abandon the Sudan, and for a few years the Mahdi, and his successor Abdullahi, known as the Khalifa, ruled over a large empire.

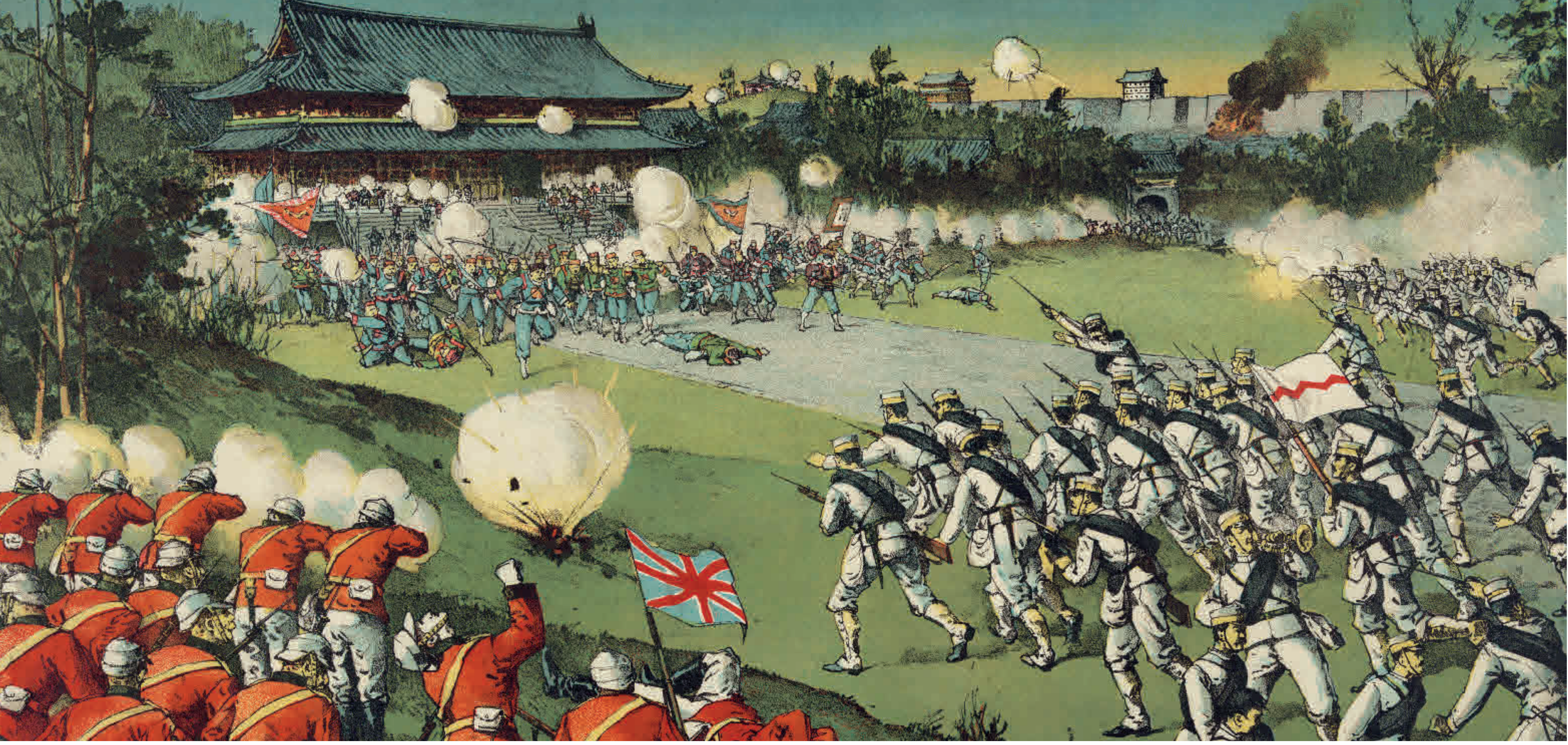
The fear that the recent defeat of a European army would rouse the Mahdist empire to a new outburst of activity led the British Government to decide in March 1896 that there should be an advance on the upper Nile. Then began the series of campaigns, along the river and across the desert, by which Lord Kitchener won a worldwide reputation. In the early autumn the army and flotilla that were to move on Omdurman concentrated under Kitchener's command around Fort Atbara, the railhead at the meeting-place of the Atbara and the Nile. The army and flotilla combined under his command represented the most powerful fighting force that had till then been seen in Africa. It was an army of many nations.

On the morning of 1 September, the Sirdar formed his army in battle array, and marched southward over the Kerreri Hills. Omdurman was crowded with the tens of thousands whom the Khalifa had mustered for the battle. The Dervish army, more than 50,000 strong, poured out of the city, and formed in battle array facing towards the north, on the sandy slopes between Omdurman and the hills where Broadwood had halted. It was about eleven o'clock when the Khalifa began to advance. The battle lasted more than five hours, but in the end the stricken field of Omdurman had broken the power of Mahdism. It was some months before the last scattered bands of Dervishes were hunted down, and the Khalifa himself was killed in battle. Thanks to the superior armament of the Anglo-Egyptian army and the attacks made by the Dervishes in dense masses, the losses of the latter were fearfully heavy, those of the former comparatively trifling. By far the most serious loss incurred in the victorious army was that of the 21st Lancers in their charge. In all the other units, British and Egyptian, the proportion of killed to wounded was singularly low, the result probably of the bad powder with which the enemy's cartridges were loaded.

(adapted from: *Famous Modern Battles* by A. Hilliard Atteridge)

Robert George Talbot Kelly, *The Flight of the Khalifa after his Defeat at the Battle of Omdurman, 2nd September 1898*, 1899.
Oil on canvas, 133.5 x 199.5 cm.
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.


R. Talbot Kelly
1899



Boxer Rebellion

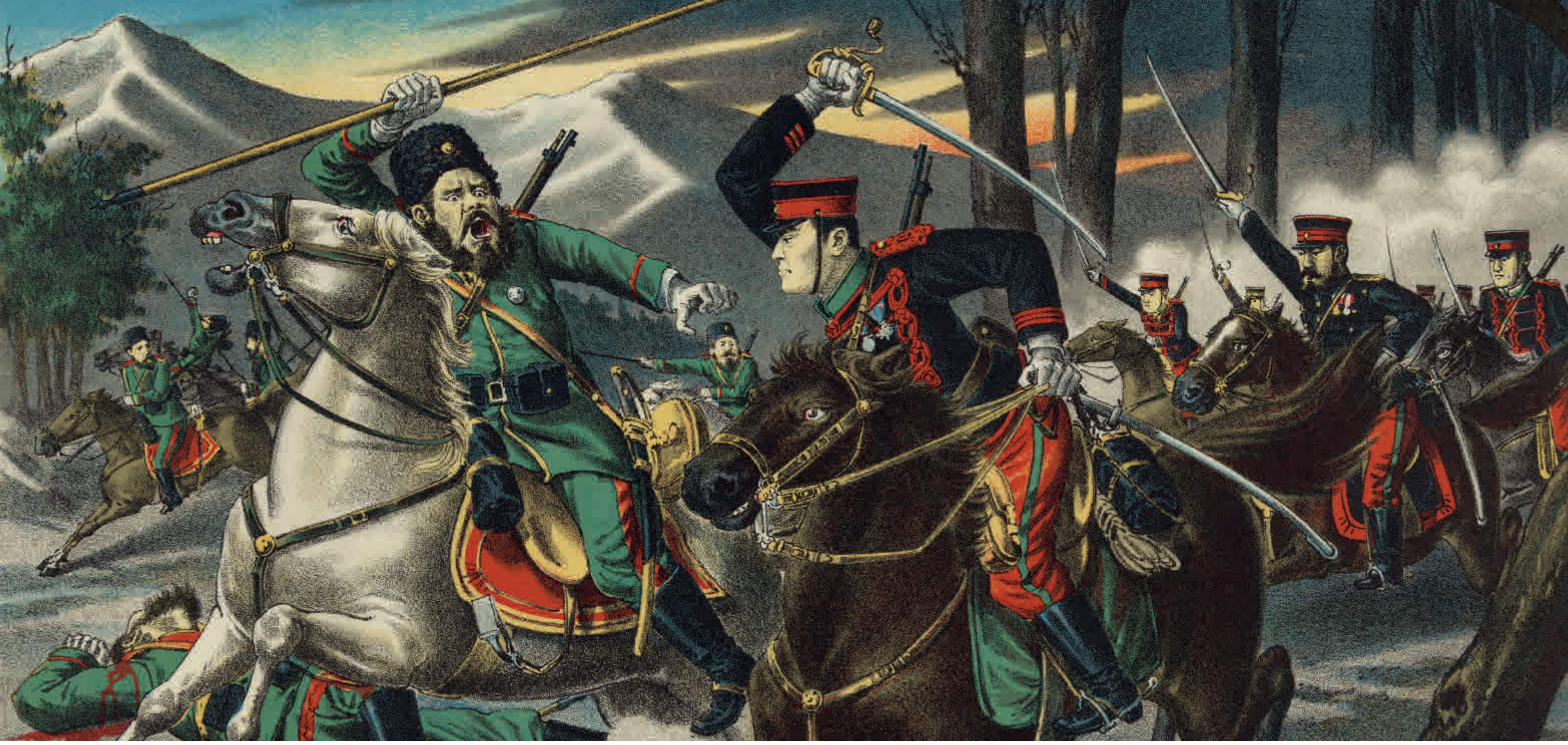
(Autumn, 1899 – 7 September, 1901)

The Boxer Rebellion refers to an event in the history of China that saw several secret societies of martial art practitioners (called "Boxers", mostly by Western observers) and peasants rise against foreigners as well as Chinese Christians whom they perceived as an imperialist threat. The Boxers were subsequently supported by conservative and nationalist elements in the Chinese government, who pressured Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908) into using the Boxers as a tool for their own anti-foreign interests. The ensuing conflict saw the Imperial Chinese army fight on all fronts; some parts fought the Boxers while others supported them and fought with them against foreigners and the allied troops. The rebellion was suppressed when an alliance of eight nations (Russia, Germany, France, Japan, USA, Italy, United Kingdom and Austro-Hungary) sent troops to relieve the besieged Christians and to further their own imperial interests in the region. The Battle of Peking (pictured above) effectively ended the revolt and sparked several punitive expeditions against suspected Boxers.

To this day, the perception of the Boxers and their rebellion is subject to debate. While it is clear that they were reacting to events that threatened their Chinese culture, a culture they were trying to preserve, they also engaged heavily in robbing and mass-murder. In general, the conflict was not short on grievances and atrocities committed by all parties involved. Several Christian missionaries abused their extra-territorial status and their influence for their own gain, the Muslim Chinese Kansu braves used the conflict to strike against Christians, and even soldiers of the alliance looted, pillaged and raped in "retaliation" after their mission had already been accomplished. As a reaction to these events, Journalist George Lynch wrote, "There are things that I must not write, and that may not be printed in England, which would seem to show that this Western civilisation of ours is merely a veneer over savagery."

Torajirô Kasai, *The Fall of the Pekin[g] Castle*, 1900.
Chromolithograph, 45.8 x 63.7 cm. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

Hannosuke Kuroki, *Japanese and Russian Cavalry Troops Clash near Chonju, North P'yongan Province, Korea*, 1904.
Chromolithograph, 39 x 54.7 cm.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. (opposite)



Russo-Japanese War

(8 February, 1904 – 5 September, 1905)

The origins of the Russo-Japanese War can be found within Imperial Russia's eastward expansion and its conduct during the Boxer Rebellion. Throughout its modern history, the Russian Empire had always been seeking warm water ports, especially in the Pacific Ocean, for reasons of commerce as well as for their strategic value for the Russian navy. In 1897, Russia negotiated the lease of Port Arthur from China with the veiled threat of its navy appearing in the seas before the port, much to the discomfort of Japan's own imperial ambitions. Additional cause was given when Russia invaded Manchuria during the Boxer Rebellion ostensibly to evict the Qing troops, but never withdrew its troops, effectively occupying the region. Japan began negotiations with both Britain and Russia to resolve the situation. When Japan was able to secure a treaty with Britain, all negotiations with Russia effectively ceased; but it had gained a valuable ally in Europe who would enter a potential war between Japan and Russia on the Japanese side, thus discouraging Russia's then-allies France and Germany to lend support. With this backing Japan attacked Port Arthur on 8 February 1904, having previously issued a formal declaration of war.

In the course of the next year and a half, the Japanese and Russian armies and navies clashed in 16 significant battles with Japan emerging victorious from the majority of conflicts. However, in the subsequent peace negotiations, mediated by the USA, Russian diplomat Sergius Witte was able to make use of Japan's need to end the war and negotiate a vast reduction of Japanese claims, thus slightly alleviating what had already been a devastating blow to Russian confidence.

As the first great conflict of the 20th century, the war was covered by many journalists, both foreign and domestic, giving rise to a lot of "media coverage" via sketches from the front, as well as propaganda sketches, as the one seen above.

The Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) 31 July - 10 November 1917.
Photograph, 5 September 1917. Photographer: Ernest Brooks (Lt.).
Ministry of Information First World War Official Collection, Imperial War Museum, London. (p. 230)

American soldiers land on the coast of Normandy. Photo taken from the back of a Higgins Boat. Photograph, 1944.
Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie / National Archives USA. (p. 231)

The World Wars

First World War
(1914-1918)

The lights are going out all over Europe: we shall not yet see them lit again in our lifetime. (Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, 5 August 1914)

The obvious beginnings of this European tension date back several years: to the time of Edward VII. On the one hand, England's dread of the gigantic growth of Germany; on the other, Berlin's politics, which had become a terror to the dwellers by the Thames; the belief that the idea of acquiring the dominion of the world had taken root in Berlin. These fears, partly due merely to envy and jealousy, but partly due also to a positive anxiety concerning existence; these fears led to the encircling policy of Edward VII, and thus was started the great drive against Germany. It is well known that Edward VII made an attempt to exercise a direct influence on the Emperor Francis Joseph to induce him to secede from the Alliance and join the Powers encircling Germany. It is likewise known that the Emperor Francis Joseph rejected the proposal, and that this decided the fate of Austria-Hungary. From that day we were no longer the independent masters of our destiny. Our fate was linked to that of Germany; without being conscious of it, we were carried away by Germany through the Alliance.

I do not mean absolutely to deny that, during the years preceding war, it would still have been possible for Germany to avert it if she had eradicated from European public opinion all suspicion respecting her dream of world dominion, for far be it from me to assert that the Western Powers were eager for war. On the contrary, it is my firm conviction that the leading statesmen of the Western Powers viewed the situation as such, that if they did not succeed in defeating Germany, the unavoidable result would be a German world domination. I mention the Western Powers,

Soldiers of 'A' Company, 11th Battalion, the Cheshire Regiment, occupy a captured German trench.
Photograph, July 1916. Photographer: J.W. Brooke (Lt.).
Ministry of Information First World War Official Collection. Imperial War Museum, London.

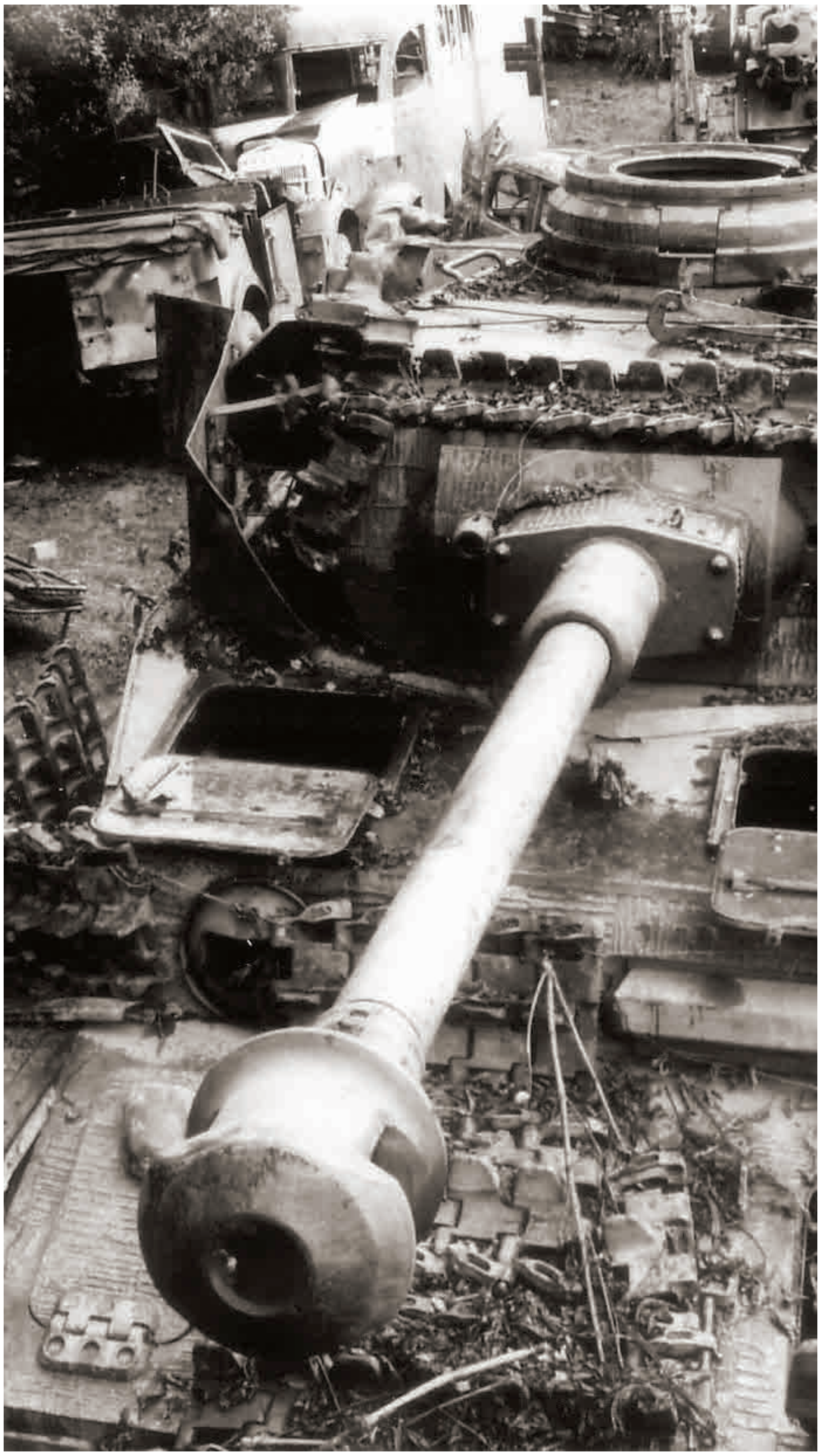
for I believe that a strong military party in Russia, which had as chief the Grand Duke Nicholas, thought otherwise, and began this war with satisfaction. The terrible tragedy of this, the greatest misfortune of all time and such is this war lies in the fact that nobody responsible willed it; it arose out of a situation created first by a Serbian assassin and then by some Russian generals keen on war, while the events that ensued took the monarchs and statesmen completely by surprise. The Entente group of Powers is as much to blame as we are. As regards to this, however, a very considerable difference must be made between the enemy states.

In 1914 neither France nor England desired war. France had always cherished the thought of revenge, but, judging from all indications, she had no intention of fighting in 1914; but, on the contrary as she did fifty years ago left the decisive moment for entering into war to the future. The war came quite as a surprise to France. England, in spite of her anti-German policy, wished to remain neutral and only changed her mind owing to the invasion of Belgium. In Russia the Tsar did not know what he wanted, and the military party urged unceasingly for war. As a matter of fact, Russia began military operations without a declaration of war. The states that followed after Italy and Romania entered into the war for purposes of conquest, Romania in particular. Italy also, of course, but owing to her geographical position, and being exposed to pressure from England, she was less able to remain neutral than Romania. But the war would never have broken out had it not been that the growing suspicion of the Entente as to Germany's plans had already brought the situation to boiling point. The spirit and demeanour of Germany, the speeches of the Emperor William, the behaviour of the Prussians throughout the world, whether it be a general at Potsdam or a *commis voyageur* out in East Africa, these Prussian manners inflicting themselves upon the world, the ceaseless boasting of their own power and the clattering of swords, roused throughout the whole world a feeling of antipathy and alarm and effected that moral coalition against Germany which in this war has found such terribly practical expression. On the other hand, I am fairly convinced that German, or rather Prussian tendencies have been misunderstood by the world, and that the leading German statesmen never had any intention of acquiring world dominion. They wished to retain Germany's place in the sun, her rank among the first Powers of the world. The ever-growing fears of the Entente, in consequence, created just that fatal competition in armaments and that coalition policy which burst like a terrible thunderstorm into war. It was only on the basis of these European fears that the French plans of revenge developed into action. England would never have drawn the sword merely for the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine; but the French plan of revenge was admirably adapted to suit the policy inaugurated by King Edward, which was derived not from French but from English motives.

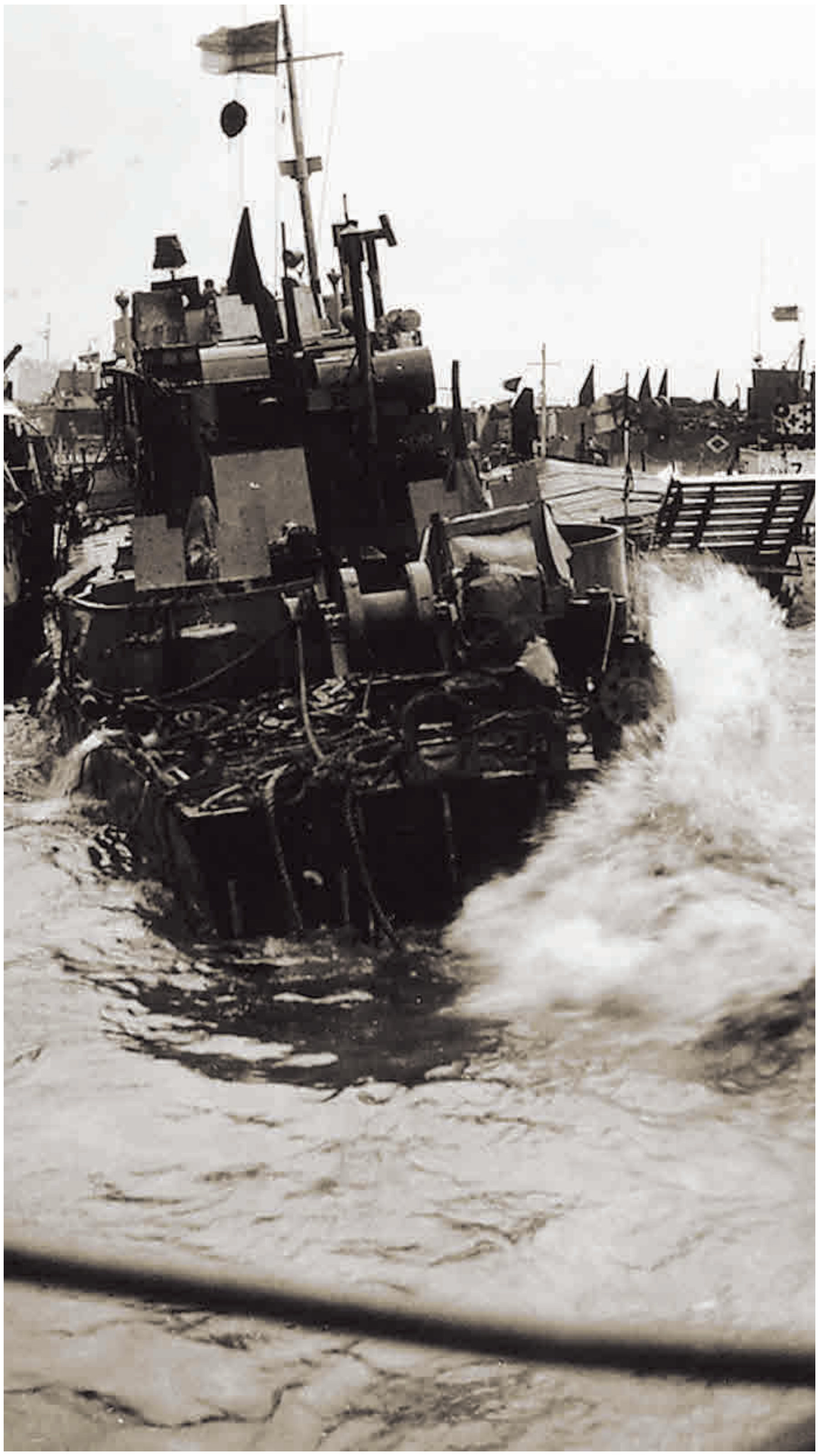
Out of this dread of attack and defence arose that mad fever for armaments which was characteristic of pre-war times. The race to possess more soldiers and more guns than one's neighbour was carried to an absurd extreme. The armaments which the nations had to bear had become so cumbersome as to be unbearable, and for long it had been obvious to everyone that the course entered upon could no longer be pursued, and that two possibilities alone remained either a voluntary and general disarmament, or war.

(adapted from: *In the World War* by O. von Czernin)

A British soldier directs a Mark IV tank as it crosses an old trench in Oosthoek Wood.
Photograph, 11 September 1917. Photographer: Ernest Brooks (Lt.).
Ministry of Information First World War Official Collection. Imperial War Museum, London.



Destroyed German tank column, eight kilometres to the west from Sées.
Photograph, 1939-1945.
Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie /
National Archives USA.



Two British LCIs during a heavy storm on 19th June 1944.
Photograph, 19th June 1944.
Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie /
National Archives USA.

Occupation of Normandy:
German paratroopers.
Photograph, 1939-1945.
Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie /
National Archives USA.

The Second World War
(1939-1945)

Needless to say the Second World War was the most politically, socially and psychologically incisive conflict of the modern era, not only affecting the perception of war but also changing the face of warfare. While the world had seen huge-scale wars or conflicts that resulted in massive loss of civilian life before, the sheer ambition and ruthlessness with which Third Reich Germany pursued its goals, ethnic cleansing or the "acquisition" of *Lebensraum* through military expansion, was unprecedented in the modern, enlightened and rational world.

It all began when Hitler was able to consolidate power as chancellor of the Weimar Republic, subsequently transforming Germany into the Third Reich and setting it on its anti-Semitic, pan-Germanic course. The conditions for this takeover were ideal: anti-Semitism has never been an uncommon phenomenon in Europe throughout the ages, giving Hitler the perfect "petri dish" to cultivate his theories of racial inferiority and Semitic conspiracies.

Germany's defeat in the First World War, which was twisted by members of the military leadership into a politically enabled defeat, allowed the accusation of the founders of the Weimar Republic of stabbing the military in the back (the so-called *Dolchstosslegende*) on the eve of victory. This left many Germans, especially those with nationalist inclinations, with the lingering feeling that Germany was robbed of its rightful position of power in Europe. Hitler was also able to claim the economic recovery after the crisis of 1929 as his personal achievement, although it had in fact been engineered years earlier by the Weimar Republic, which was able to negotiate a reduction in war reparations with the allied nations and strengthen the German economy. With a booming industry and a good deal of cleverly negotiated loans from abroad, Hitler and his cabal of cronies slowly turned production towards war.

The stage was set for the widest-ranging conflict the world had ever seen. On 1 September, 1939, Germany began its invasion of Poland with the words "[…] From 5:45am, we returned fire […]" (transl.) and the fabricated claim that Polish soldiers had started shooting on German territory. In the following six years, the theatre of war would extend to major parts of Europe, the Mediterranean, Africa, China, Russia, the Pacific, the Atlantic and the Middle East. Crucial turning points in the war would be the Battle of Britain that Germany was not able to decide for itself; Operation Barbarossa, which led to a huge portion of the Reich's army being tied up on the Eastern Front where the Red Army fought them to a standstill in such battles as Leningrad and Stalingrad; the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which led to the USA's entry into military operations; Operation Overlord, the landing of Allied troops on the shores of Normandy; and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which effectively ended the last stage of the Second World War.

The war also brought a flurry of technological changes in its wake that would change the appearance and execution of warfare forever. For the first time, aerial combat and bombardment was not simply a supportive branch of the armed force but became a crucial, decisive factor in its own right. Advances in rocketry did not only herald the usage of long-range ballistic weapons and space travel, but also the future of aviation: jet planes. The tank became the primary weapon on land, especially on the German side where it was utilised with stunning efficiency in *Blitzkrieg* tactics.

Probable view of Omaha Beach, where Allied forces have landed to unload an impressive amount of manpower and material. Photograph, 1944. Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie / National Archives USA.

An American tank fires a shell.
Photograph, 1939-1945.
Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie /
National Archives USA.

An American 'B-26 Marauder' bomber drops its payload.
Photograph, 22nd June 1944.
Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie /
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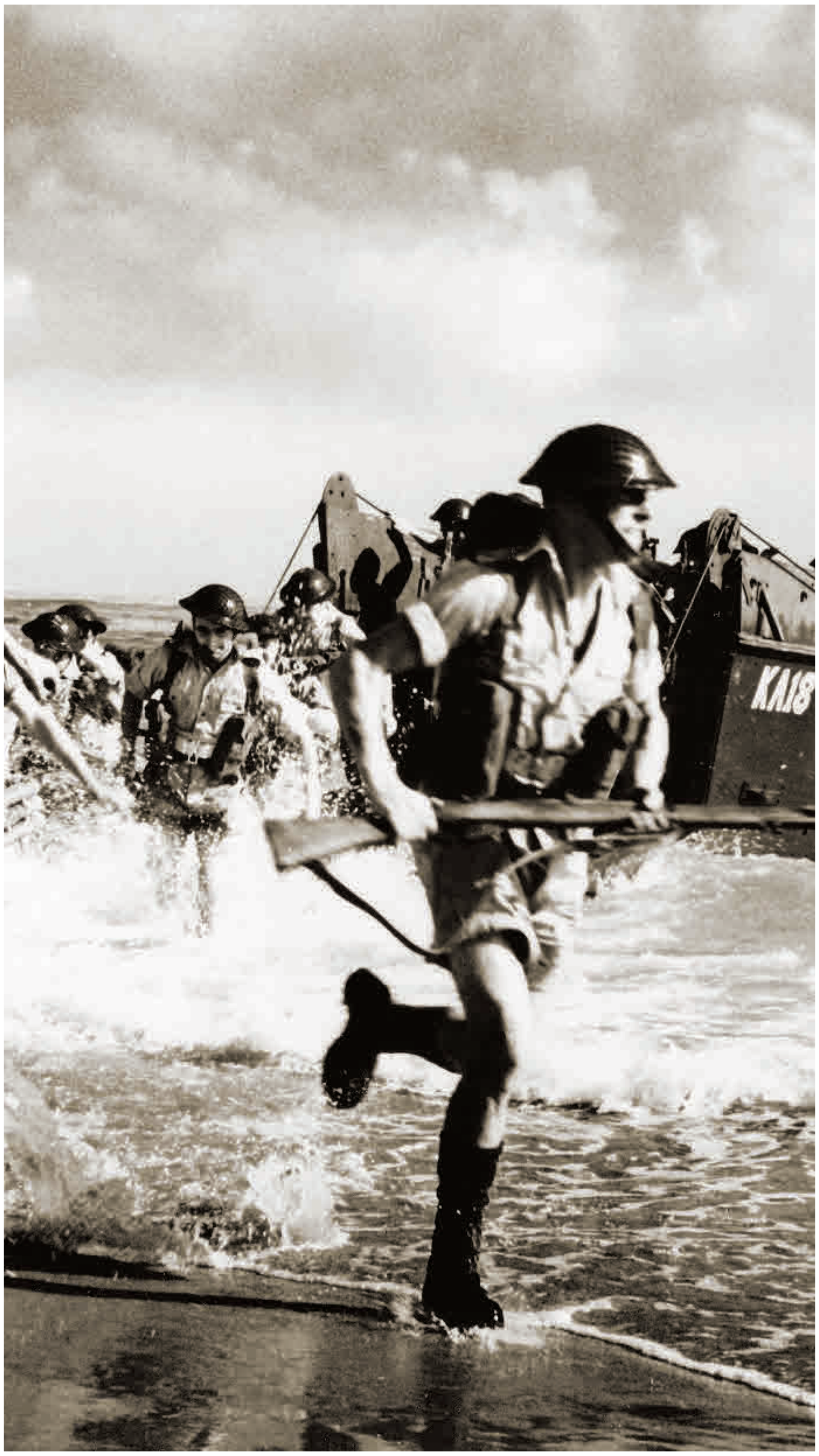
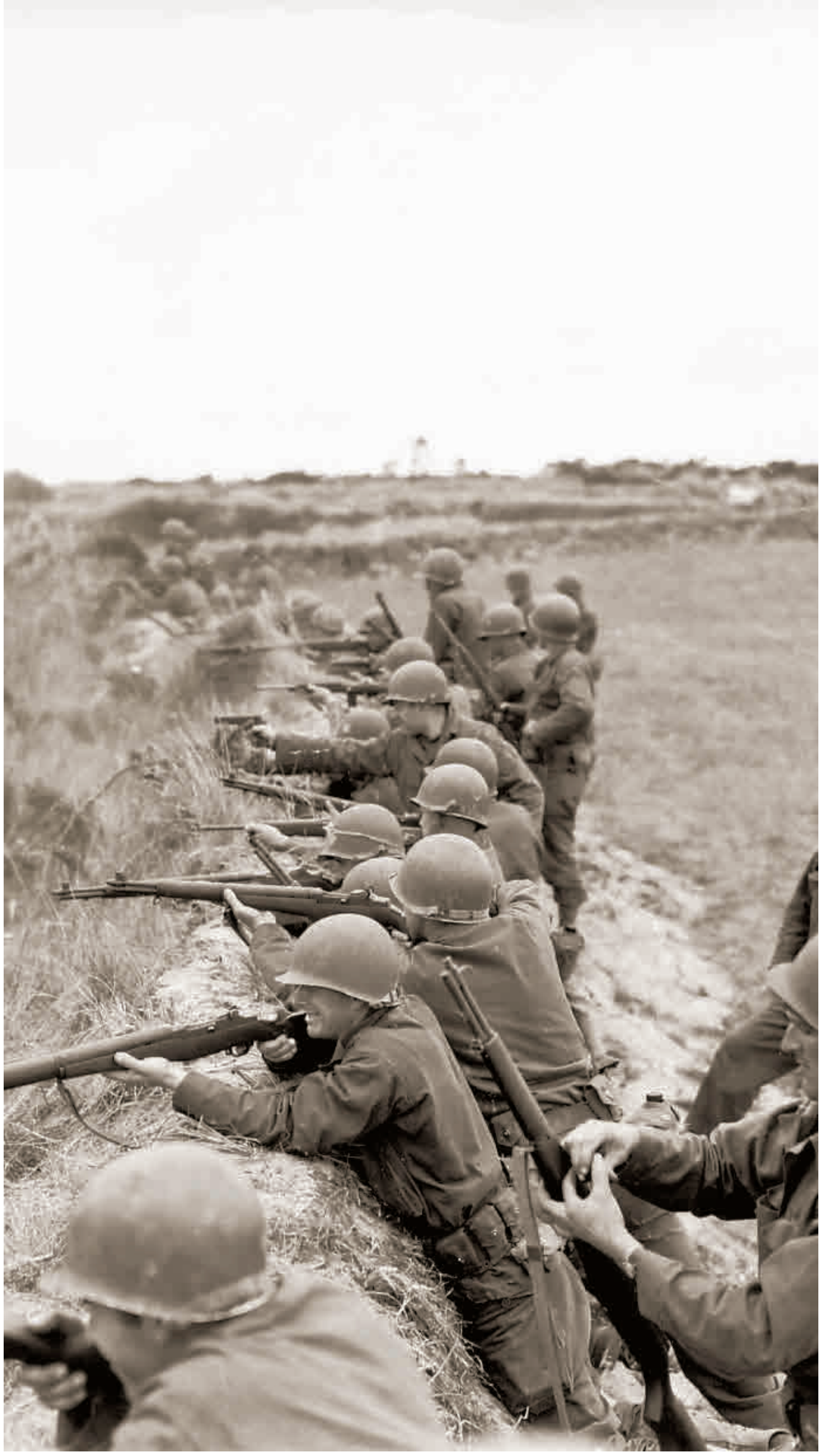


A British unit disembarks a LCA.
Photograph, 1944.
Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie /
National Archives USA.



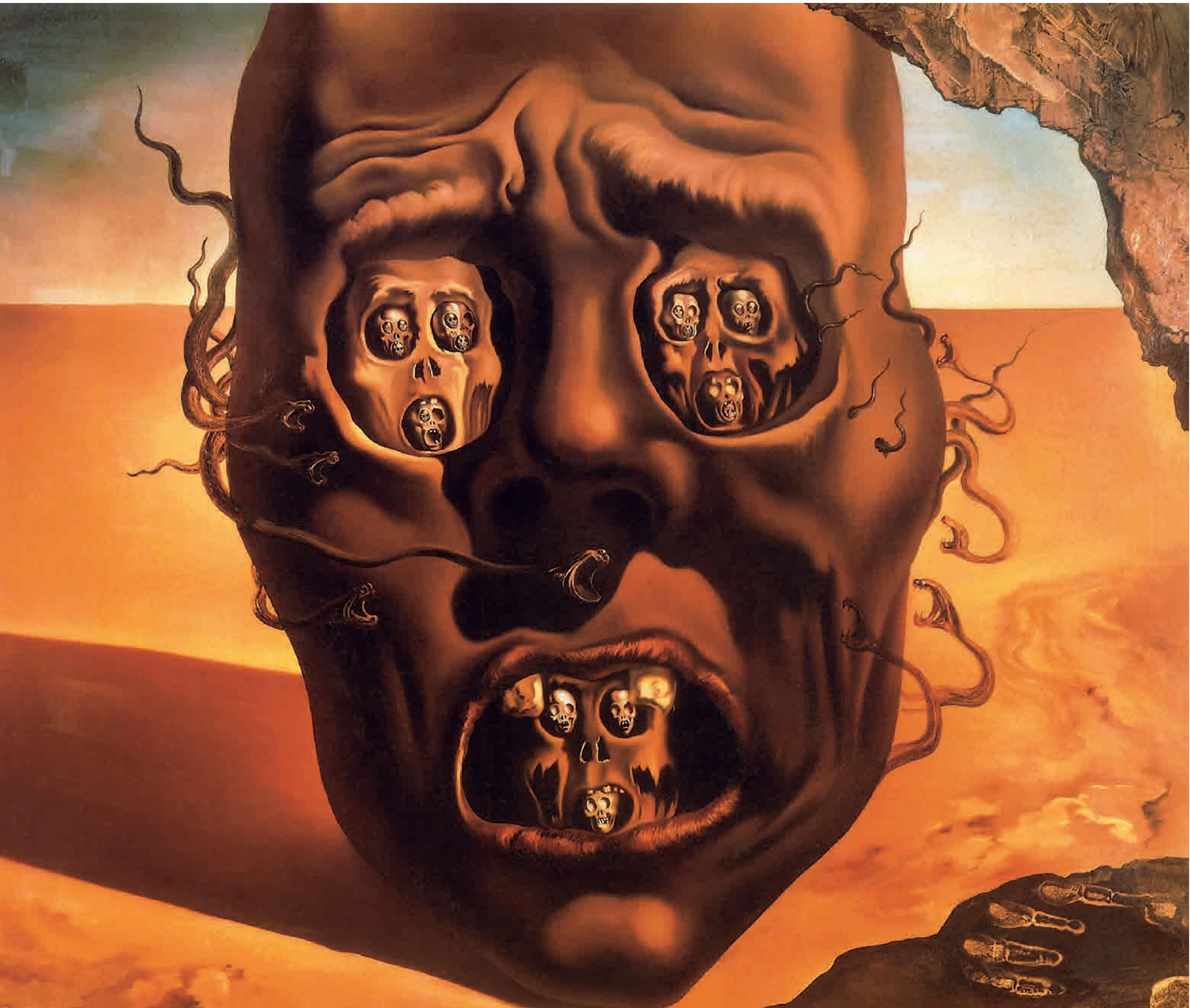
Battle of Normandy. Summer 1944: A light infantry unit ducking behind a parapet.
Photograph, 1939-1945.
Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie /
National Archives USA.

Military intelligence and cryptography also took on a major role with Polish code-breakers being the first to decode Germany's Enigma-codes and relaying that information to the Allied forces, enabling them to eventually put an end to the German U-boat terror in the Atlantic, and monitor German communications. This ensured the success of Operation Overlord as it was "protected" by a pseudo-operation that envisioned a European invasion via northern Africa and the Balkans and was meant to deceive German intelligence. The British cryptographers were able to corroborate the success of the deception which led to the triumph of the Normandy operation. Finally, the development of the atomic bomb created the cruelest and most devastating technology mankind had ever seen.

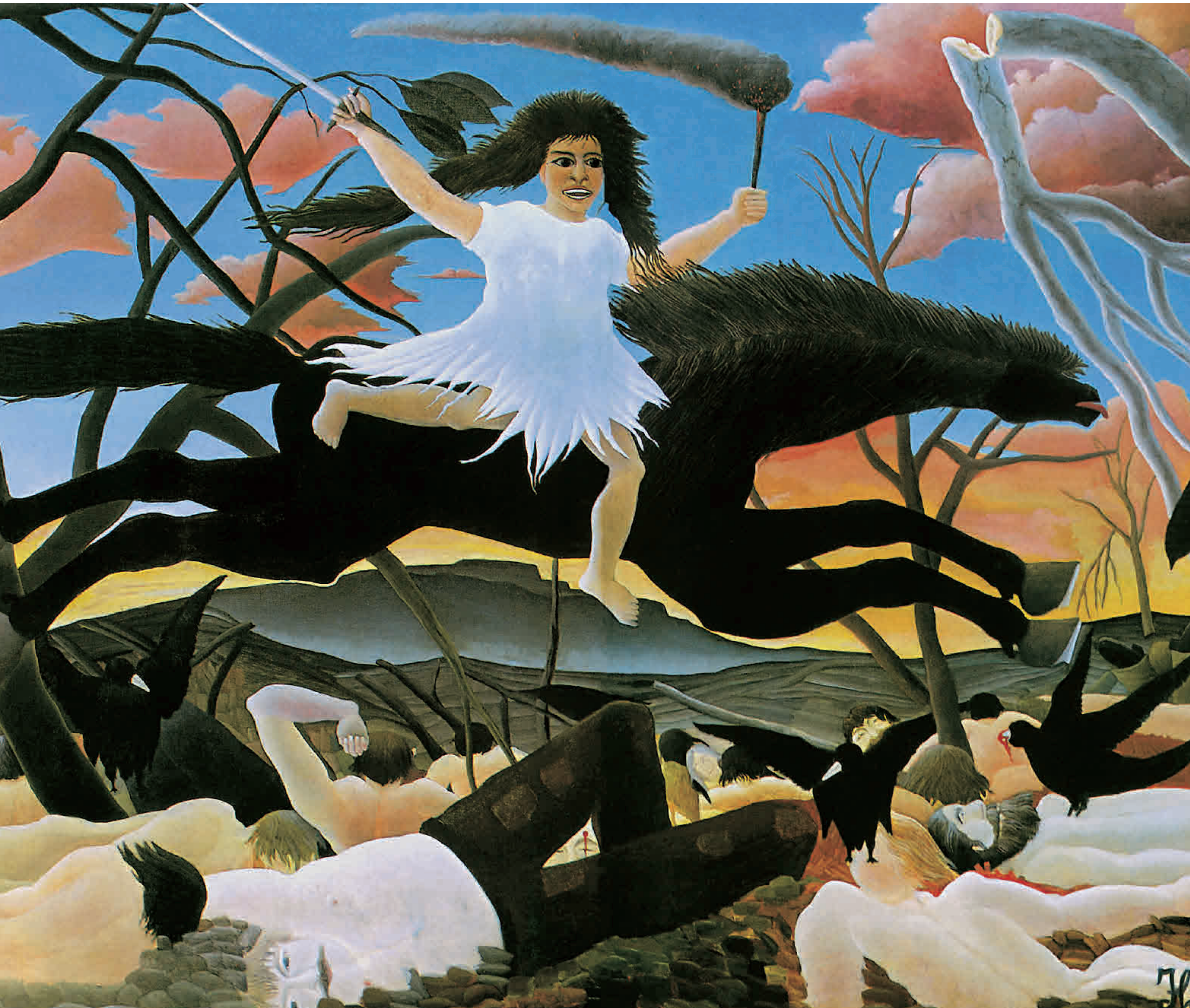
Parallel to the change in perception, the visual representation of war also transformed. With the rise of the photograph decades before, the general public was no longer dependent on paintings or illustrations to give them a rough idea of events, and which always had room for misrepresentation and idealisation. Through photography the focus shifted from visualisation to documentation. This, however, did not mean the end of the battle painter or the end of war being processed through art – quite the opposite. What changed was the way the war was presented. Some painted to process what was happening, others to show specific episodes. But none of them glorified the war itself or the victors for employing the better stratagem or outwitting the opponent. Rather it was the courage of soldiers and leaders, celebrated in the face of a necessary war aimed to stop a nation led by megalomaniac leaders bent on European domination. The period of war was also the high-point for propaganda posters and the creation of propagandist aesthetic, with all nations actively involved in trying to raise morale, encourage participation or vilify the enemy.

American soldiers running on Paris Avenue in Cherbourg, looking for German snipers.
Photograph, 1939-1945.
Conseil Régional de Basse-Normandie /
National Archives USA.

Salvador Dalí, *The Face of War*, 1940-1941.
Oil on canvas, 64 x 79 cm. Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam. (p. 242)



War and Abstraction



Knight, Death, and the Devil

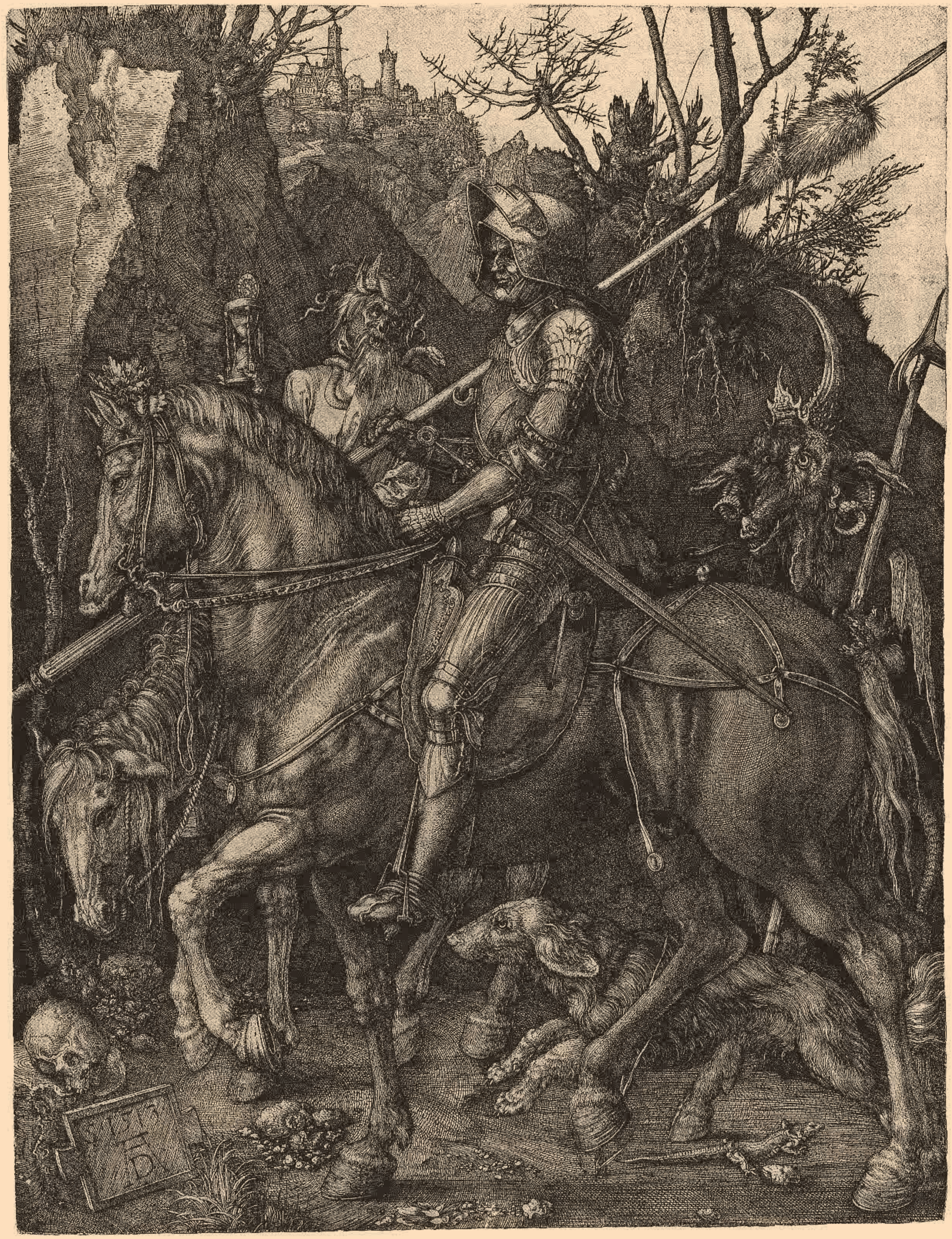
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. (Psalm 23)

Albrecht Dürer's *Knight, Death, and the Devil*, one of his most famous *Meisterstiche* (master engravings), is a copperplate engraving that, at first glance, may not have much to do with the topic of war itself. However – despite all the possible routes an interpretation of different details could take – the objective of the artwork is to comment on "the way of the warrior", a life dedicated to the principles of knighthood and chivalry. In Dürer's lifetime the age of the "classical" knight was long gone; having passed away with the advent of gunpowder and innovations in military strategy; its ideals, however, had still remained.

The engraving shows a knight on horseback, riding past two figures; a bleak landscape with jagged rocks and barren trees creating a sullen atmosphere as a backdrop for the preternatural scene. Only the fortified town in the background provides a glimmer of hope – possibly being the destination of the protagonist's travel. Whether the town represents safety, Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem or whether Dürer just wanted to include the skyline of his native Nuremberg, is a question that will not be debated here. The figure to the right represents the devil, depicted here as an anthropomorphic composite of several animals (rat, boar, ram and goat being the most identifiable) holding a vicious looking polearm, its head adorned with a horn that evokes descriptions of the Beast from the biblical Revelation or elements from the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch. The devil does not seem to take an active interest in the knight, except for watching him with an indeterminable, slightly goofy gaze. His placing in the rightmost part of the composition indicates that the knight has left him and possibly his temptations behind. His presence, however, still indicates that his role in the knightly life is not to be underestimated. The second figure shows a more lively interest in the knight's proceedings. Death, shown as a bearded corpse with a snake wreathed around its shoulders, head and crown, holds an hourglass, or rather seems almost to be waving it, as a taunting gesture to remind the knight that death awaits when the sand has run out, at the end of his time. The knight himself, confirmed as knight by his full suit of armour and his horse, looks stoically ahead, his face set in grim determination. He seems to be ignoring both death and the devil, his eyes firmly planted on the road ahead and holding a long lance that cuts through the composition of the engraving. It separates the lower two-thirds from the upper third, as if to indicate that everything that remains on the path of the true warrior is death and the goal. The knight is accompanied by a dog. As a dog's most characteristic virtue is said to be loyalty, it is safe to say that loyalty is meant to be the constant companion of a life dedicated to chivalrous ideals. The skull in the lower left corner is generally accepted to further reinforce the notion that at the end of the warrior's way, death awaits. In sum, the life of a knight is fraught with death and temptation. Thus, Dürer's late addition to the codex of chivalry, while not being a war painting itself, exemplifies ideals for a life of fighting, both abstract and concrete. In its focus on death as the final frontier and constant companion for and to the knight, it is slightly reminiscent of Yamamoto Tsunetomo's reading of the Bushido as the "Way of Dying".

Henri Rousseau, *War, or the Ride of Discord*, 1894.
Oil on canvas, 114 x 195 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. (p. 243)

Albrecht Dürer, *Knight, Death, and the Devil*, 1513.
Etching, 19 x 24.5 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.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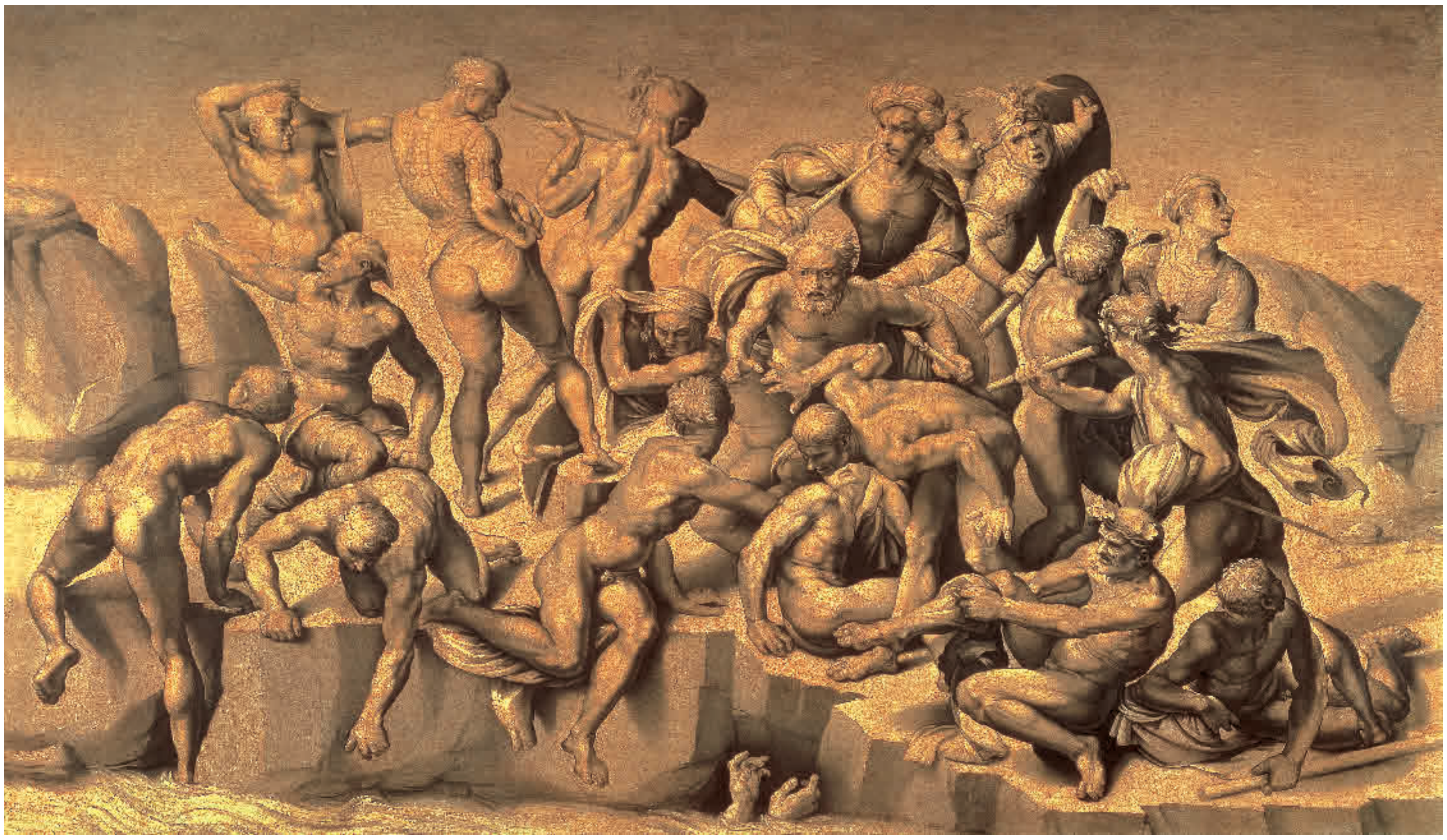


Battle of Cascina

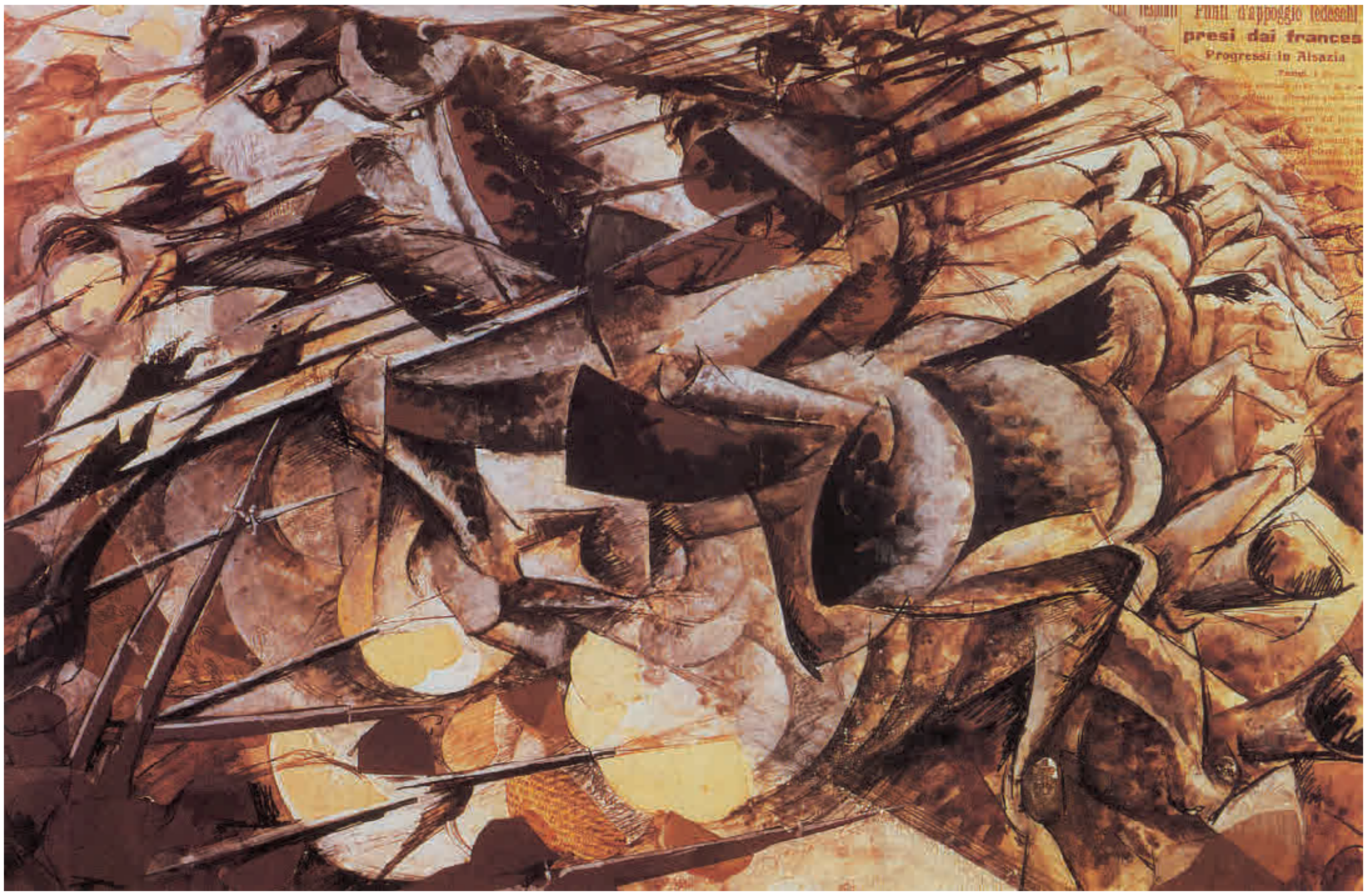
(28 July, 1364)

I hope that I may always desire more than I can accomplish. (Michelangelo)

Similar to the Battle of Anghiari, the Battle of Cascina was one of the many inconsequential battles that were fought between Italian city states in the 14th century. The similarity extends further, as the painting for the conflict was commissioned by a Florentine statesman in celebration of the battle but never properly finished. Michelangelo Buonarroti, to whom the commission was given and who was reportedly keen on outdoing another famous Florentine master, one Leonardo da Vinci, painted several cartoons (preparatory sketches), detailing his unique take on the battle. Unfortunately, the original sketches were lost with the exception of one sketch of a nude figure, discovered only decades later. However, since his original sketches were copied by some of his students, one of them being Bastiano "Aristotile" da Sangallo, who drew the sketch seen above, Michelangelo's vision of the battle survived.

The scene that Michelangelo chose to depict occurred when the Florentine army made camp at Cascina and a substantial contingent of soldiers decided to seek relief from the blazing sun in the Arno River. Informed by his spies, Pisan leader John Hawkwood chose this moment to attack the Florentine forces. At the sound of the signal horn, the bathing soldiers started a mass exodus in the nude from the river to reach their armour and weapons. Michelangelo, or Aristotile da Sangallo, gave the scene a surreal tone: the landscape is strongly stylised and the stone bank of the Arno River resembles a stage or a platform rather than a real riverbank. The bodies of the soldiers form a curious ensemble that, again, bears hardly any resemblance to what the real scene could have looked like. Rather, it appears to be an anatomical display of the male body. Of course we will never know how Michelangelo intended to design the final wall painting, but its intention remains clear: a homoerotic testament to one of the rare occasions of mass nudity in the history of warfare.

Aristotile da Sangallo (after **Michelangelo**), *The Battle of Cascina,* 1542.
Oil on panel, 76.5 x 129 cm.
Collection of the Earl of Leicester, Holkham Hall, Norfolk.

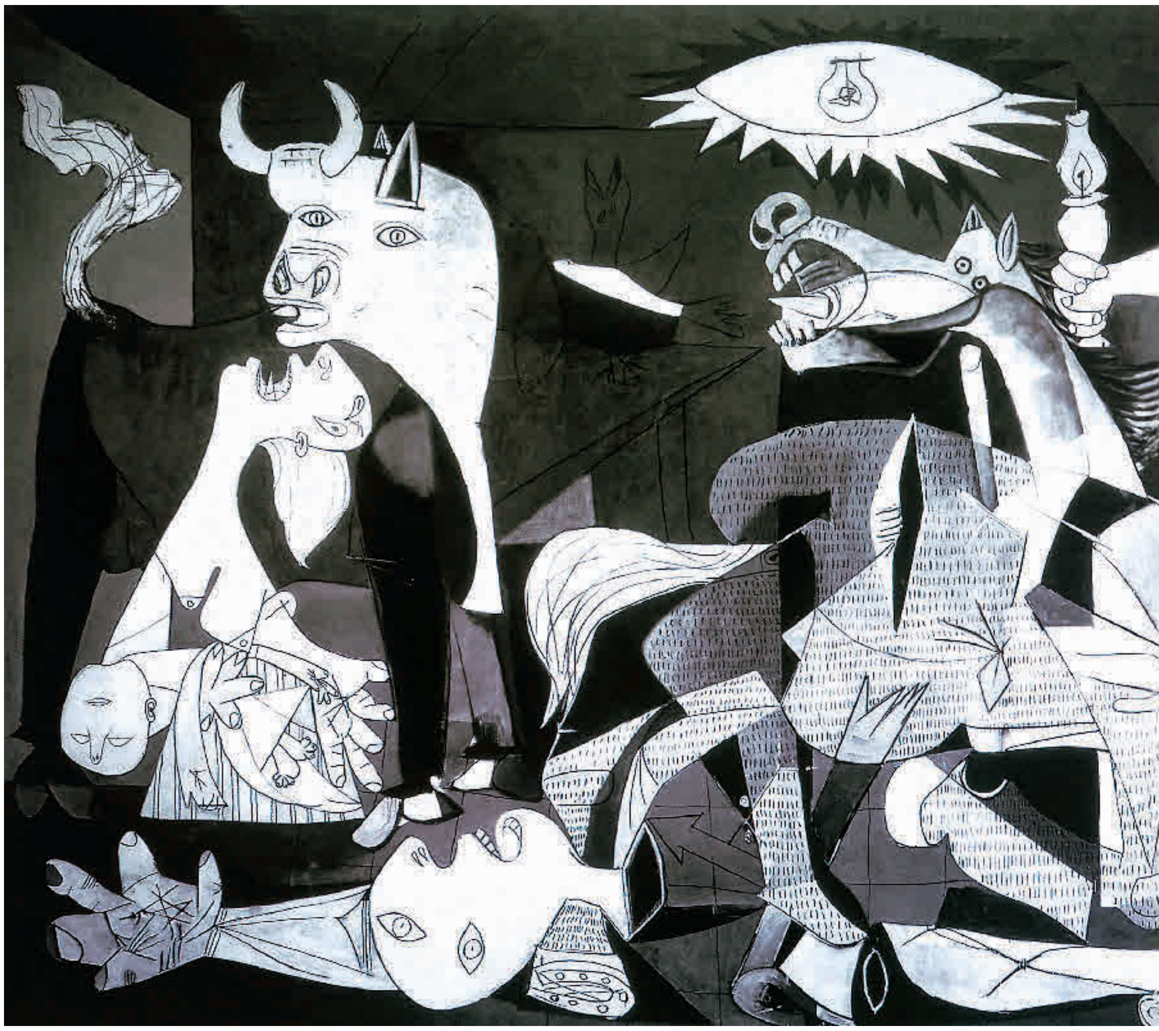


Umberto Boccioni, *The Charge of the Lancers*, 1915.
Oil and collage on cardboard, 32 x 50 cm.
Collection of Riccardo and Magda Jucker, Milan.

The Charge of the Lancers

"[War is] a wonderful, marvellous, terrible thing. And in the mountains it seems like a battle with the infinite. Grandiose, immense, life and death. I am Happy." (Umberto Boccioni)

Umberto Boccioni's *The Charge of the Lancers* is both a typical and atypical representation of Italian Futurist art. Futurism, as it was conceived by writer Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, was a celebration of all things "modern" and technologically advanced, and a rebellion against all political and artistic tradition that was mired in the past. Furthermore, the futurists revered war and violence as a necessary catharsis that rids the world of everything that is undesirable ("We will glorify war – the world's only hygiene […]"; from the *Futurist Manifesto*). With this conceptual context in mind and with the First World War as a backdrop, Boccioni painted *Charge*, his only war painting and today probably one of his least regarded artworks. For all of Boccioni's reverence of technology and modernity, *The Charge of the Lancers* has a strangely old-fashioned subject with its lancers on horseback bearing down on a group of riflemen. The last successful cavalry charge had been conducted during the Franco-Prussian War and subsequently led military analysts to assume that cavalry was not yet obsolete, despite quickly evolving firearms; an assumption that was quickly proven wrong during the early stages of the First World War. Despite the very un-technological group of lancers as the central object of the painting, the aesthetic elements of the artwork are typically futurist: the division and abstraction of form and light, the composition that highlights the speed and dynamic, and the twisted perspective that stacks row upon row of lancers into the infinity of the background. In light of the concept of this particular painting, it seems highly ironic that Umberto Boccioni died during a cavalry exercise, trampled by horses, in 1916.

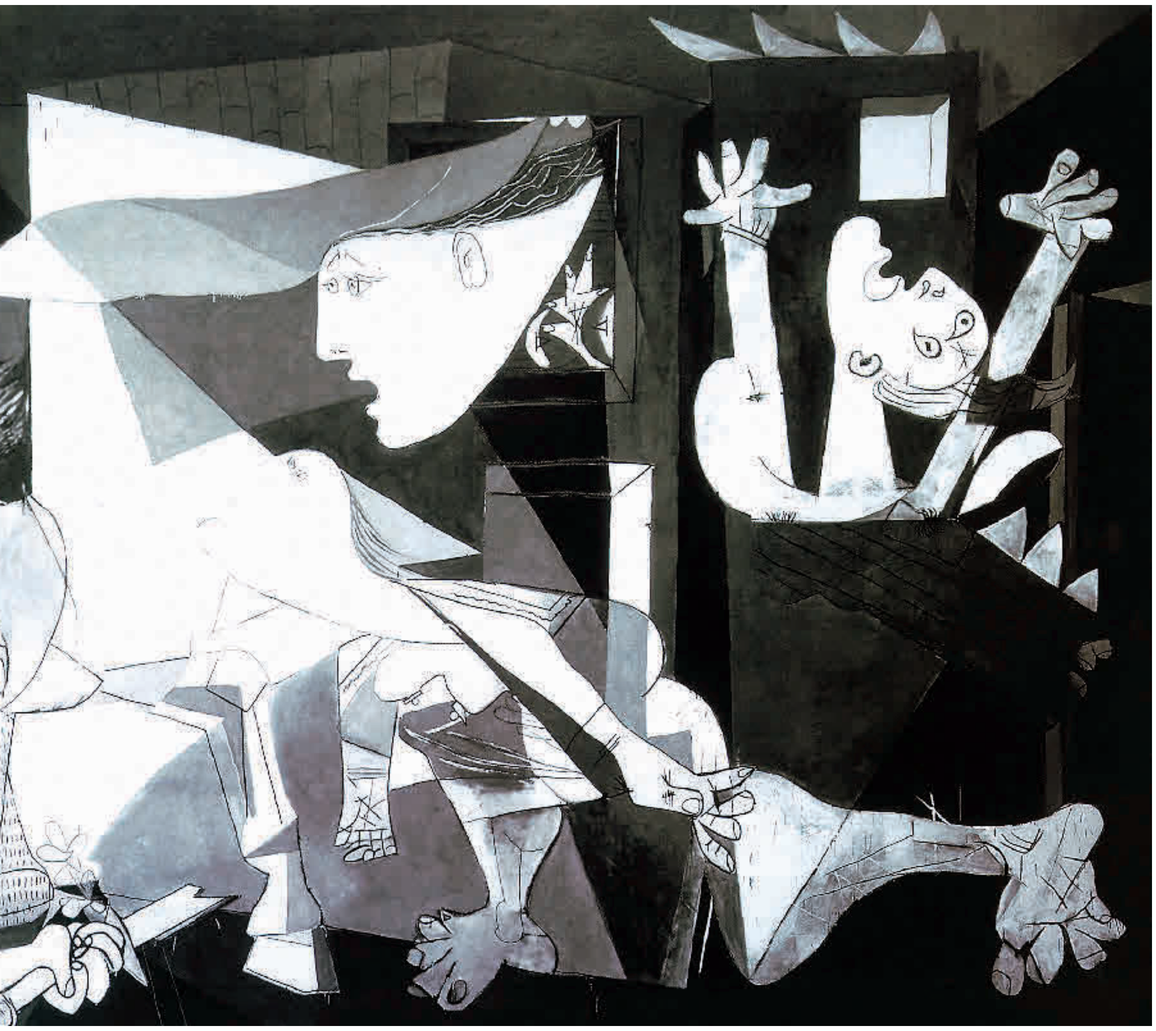


The Bombing of Guernica

In the panel on which I am working, which I shall call Guernica*, and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death.* (Pablo Picasso)

On 26 April 1937, a German bomber squadron, the Condor Legion, conducted several bombing raids on the Basque town of Guernica. The outward justification was the presence of an arms manufacturing plant on the outskirts of the city and the claimed presence of Republican forces that had retreated there earlier. Many aspects, however, lead to the conclusion that the bombing was purely intended to cause terror and intimidation. Some of these are: the plant itself did not suffer any damage, the main target was the city centre where many citizens were gathered because it was market day; the payload of the bombers consisted of incendiary and heavy bombs unusual for a rather small and unimportant target; and several contemporary German military records strongly indicate that the village served as testing ground for bombing strategies. The casualty numbers are debated but it is undoubted that the victims were all civilians, making the bombing the first "aerial operation" against non-combatants.

In the same year, the Spanish Republican government commissioned Pablo Picasso to create a painting to commemorate the event at the World Fair of 1937. This commission resulted in the world's arguably most famous anti-war painting to date. While the painting is governed by abstraction and symbolism, and the interpretations thereof range far and wide, the core "message" of the painting as a testament



to the horrors of war is generally agreed upon. The whole, surreal scene seems to be set in a dark room, indicated by a small window on the right and a light bulb at ceiling height and slightly left of the centre of the painting. It is populated by twisted and bizarrely shaped human and animal figures: a screaming woman over the dead body of a child, the dark body of a bull looming over the woman, contrasted by its slightly detached white head; a broken human figure is lying on the ground, its arms and head – the face frozen in torment – scattered across the floor: one arm is holding a broken sword while the other arm shows a scarred palm. The central figure of the scene is a panicking horse with a gaping hole in its body, apparently pierced by a broken plank; an eye-shaped light bulb (Span. *bombilla* – a visual play on words and the only direct reference to the real event) with a fiery halo looms above the horse's head. The ghostly form of a woman floats out of a dark window holding a candle, generally thought to be a symbol of peace. Beneath the floating woman, a panicked woman with distorted features and a hand that shows similar scarring to the severed arm to the left, flees towards the horse, staring blankly at the light bulb. The last figure of the painting seems to be engulfed by a similarly fiery halo that is emitted from the bulb, screaming and stretching towards the only bright window depicted in the scene. Although all of these elements and their relation to each other allow for many interpretations, the central message is unmistakable. This is not the same image of war that generations of painters have glorified in the past; this war is cruel, bleak and does not spare the innocent. Decades after its creation, the painting still stands strong as a symbol of art decrying war.

Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937.
Oil on canvas, 349.3 x 776 cm.
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid.

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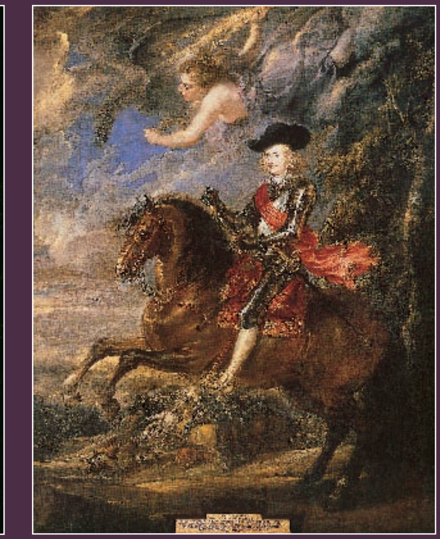

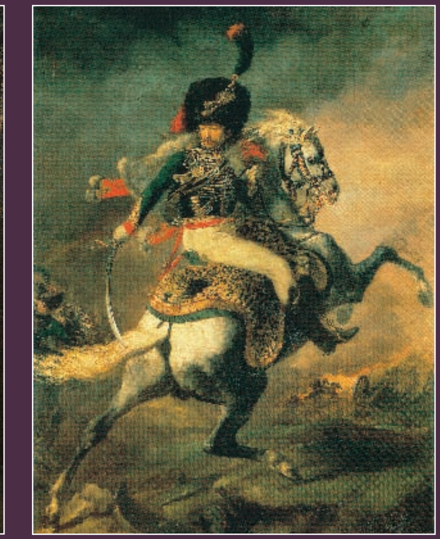

The history of mankind has always gone hand in hand with the history of war. War has elevated empires to blinding heights only to bring them crashing down again. It has immortalised brilliant individuals but traumatised entire generations of people. For better or for worse, war has helped shape civilisation and society as we know it today. Only recently, in the last century, has man's perspective on war changed fundamentally. No longer a glorious undertaking, it has become the impersonation of the worst that humanity has to offer. Nowhere is this drastic change more visible than in war-inspired art.

The art of war has come a long way, from the boasting of Ramesses II about his victory at Kadesh in the reliefs of Abu Simbel to Picasso's famous anti-war painting *Guernica*. This book will trace and illustrate this development with fascinating artwork from two millennia of art history along with textual accounts of battle, written by contemporary and early modern scholars, compiled by Victoria Charles. Additionally, the book features excerpts from a well-known treatise written by the greatest military thinker of mankind: Sun Tzu.